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# PROGRAM CONTINUITY



*Principles into Practice—  
Making Connections in  
the Upper Grades*







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Making Connections in  
the Upper Grades*



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This Guide to accompany the video program called **Program Continuity: Principles into Practice—Making Connections in the Upper Grades** was developed and written by Jane Felling, with contributions by Alan Rich, Alberta Education, Red Deer Regional Office.

The author, **Jane Felling**, began her teaching career in 1983 in Leduc. She was awarded the First Year Teacher of the Year Award for Edmonton and District in that year. In 1985 she was a member of Alberta Education's Language Arts Pilot Team and field tested new materials. Since that year Jane has consulted in the Language Arts area and has done workshops across Western Canada and in the United States. Currently on leave from teaching, Jane has been busy writing materials, including the first book in the ACCESS NETWORK **Program Continuity** series, *Program Continuity: The Positive Link—Transitions from E.C.S. to Grade One*. She has also co-authored an elementary math book and continues to consult in the area of Program Continuity on behalf of Alberta Education.

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The video program **Program Continuity: Principles into Practice—Making Connections in the Upper Grades** is approximately 45-minutes in length. The order number is:

BPN 3146-02

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**ACCESS NETWORK**

295 Midpark Way, S.E.

Calgary, Alberta

Canada

T2X 2A8

FAX: (403) 256-6837

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*Producer:* Pauline Urquhart

*Editor:* Betty Gibbs

*Graphic Designer:* Barbara Cooner

*Typesetter:* Teresa Christensen

*Cover art:* Marika Chen

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ISBN 1-895350-00-X

Printed and Bound in Edmonton, Alberta






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# Introduction

## What Is Alberta Education's Program Continuity Policy?

*Education Program Continuity* is a policy statement on the articulation of children's learning experiences E.C.S. through Grade 6, first published by Alberta Education in March 1988. The provincial implementation date of the policy is August 1993.

"Alberta Education, in cooperation with schools and private E.C.S. program operators, will ensure continuity in children's E.C.S. through Grade six learning experiences which are consistent with principles of child development."

*Education Program Continuity—A Policy Statement on the Articulation of Children's Learning Experiences*, March 1988, p.9.

## An Operational Definition of Continuity

Continuity is an approach to learning and instruction that emphasizes integrating and connecting the total learning experiences of a child. The intent of the policy is to maximize the overall progress of each student each year. (*Guide to Education: Elementary School Handbook, E.C.S. to Grade Six, 1990-1992*, p. 16)



The policy focuses on practices that enhance connections for students. It addresses six main areas where these connections need to be made. They include:

- Continuity/Connections between Home and School
- Continuity/Connections across Subject Areas
- Continuity/Connections from Grade Level to Grade Level
- Continuity/Connections between Curriculum and Assessment
- Continuity/Connections from Teacher to Teacher
- Continuity/Connections from School to School

(For a more in-depth description of these areas see Link 6 "Program Continuity—the Big Picture.")

**Program Continuity: Principles into Practice—Making Connections in the Upper Grades**, which includes both this book and one 45-minute video program, has been designed to assist teachers to:

- reflect on and discuss the key points of the policy
- examine and discuss actual teacher, student and school samples that demonstrate appropriate applications of the policy.



## Putting the Policy into Practical Terms

The video program **Program Continuity: Principles into Practice—Making Connections in the Upper Grades** illustrates program continuity in action. Schools and teachers have been videotaped in a variety of situations to demonstrate application of the policy at the upper elementary level. The video focuses on developmentally appropriate teaching practices, and curricular planning.

This print resource has been designed to be used independently or in conjunction with the video program. The book is organized into seven Links or sections that support the key areas identified in the policy. Links include:

1. Principles of Child Development
2. Creating an Effective Environment
3. Building a Literate Environment—Focus on Writing
4. Ensuring Continuity with Theme Planning
5. Connections to the Home and Community
6. Program Continuity—The Big Picture
7. Planning Your Year

The Links contain activities appropriate for independent reflection and personal planning as well as group discussion. They can be used at staff meetings with one person directing the activity for the group(s), or at an inservice or professional development day. Materials from the resource can be copied and distributed to facilitate participation and discussion among participants.

The Links can be used in or out of sequence. Each Link can stand on its own and be used independently of the others. However, the sections are designed to work together to form a comprehensive professional resource.

When using the materials for the first time, start with Link 1 and follow sequentially through the resource. If use is initiated at the beginning of the school year, be sure to review Links 2 and 4. The yearly calendar included in Link 7 will help you plan how to use the other sections of the resource throughout the year.

Special features of the resource include actual teaching samples, student work, materials developed by schools and an extensive bibliography.

Other Alberta Education publications (available through the L.R.D.C.<sup>1</sup>) that give background information and an overview of the policy are:

1. *Education Program Continuity: A Policy Statement on the Articulation of Children's Learning Experiences*, 1988.
2. *Program Continuity: Elementary Education in Action*, 1990.
  1. An Introduction
  2. In the Classroom
  3. In the School
  4. Between Home and School
  5. Assessment in the Classroom

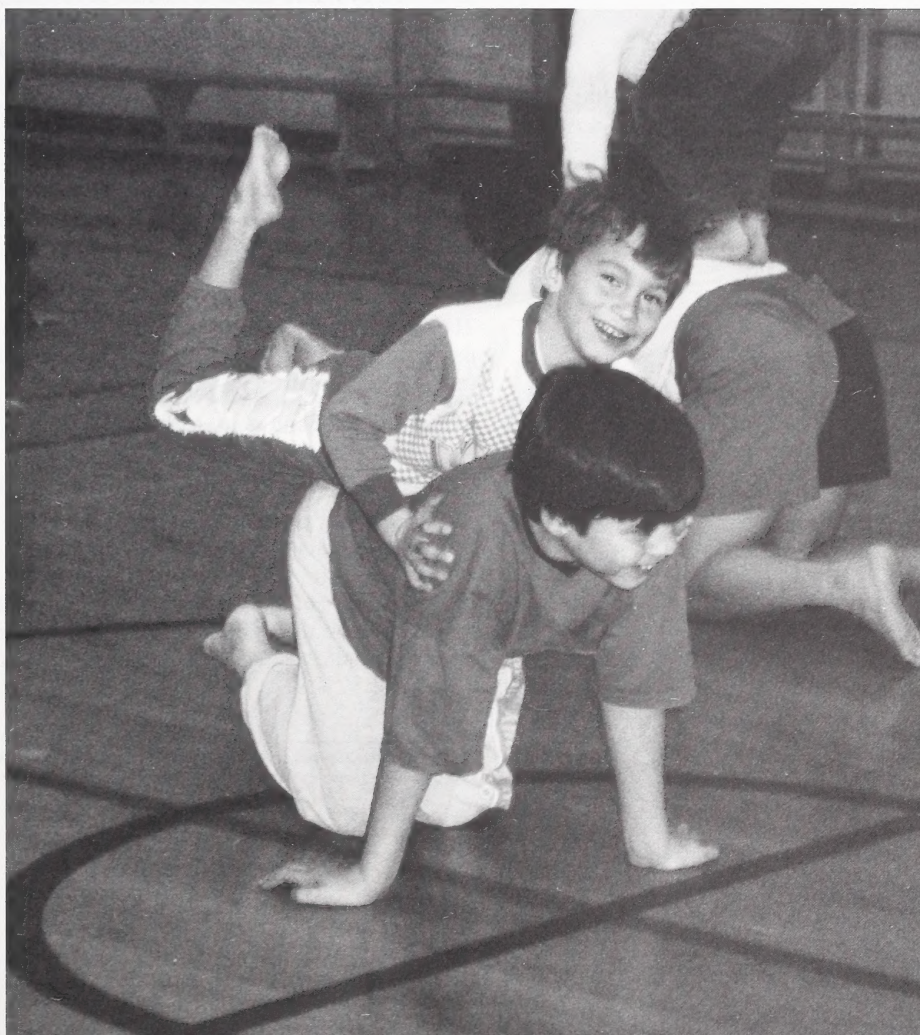
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<sup>1</sup>Learning Resources Distribution Centre, 12360-142 Street, Edmonton, AB, T5L 4X9. Tel. (403) 427-2767  
Fax (403) 422-9750



# Link 1

## Principles of Child Development





# Principles of Child Development

At the heart of the Program Continuity Policy is the premise that we educate the whole child. Educational programs should have a balanced approach to the social, emotional, physical, creative, intellectual and moral development of the child. The Policy states that **practices must be consistent with principles of child development.**

## What is Development?

There are two dimensions of human development that educators need to consider. The first is the **normative dimension**. This refers to what most children can and cannot do at a given age or stage. The Kid Q in this Link is based on the normative dimension. Educators must be aware of the typical stages of growth and development of their students so that they can plan developmentally appropriate learning experiences for them.

When the term “developmentally appropriate practice” is used in connection with the Program Continuity Policy, it refers to activities, strategies, and instruction that support both the normative and dynamic dimensions of human development.

The **dynamic dimension** of development has more to do with what causes development and learning to occur. The dynamic dimension has three interrelated aspects:

- the sequences and stages of learning, and the transformation that occurs from one developmental stage to another
- the impact of early experiences on later development and functioning
- the long-term cumulative effect, both positive and negative, of repeated experiences over time on a learner.

Teachers must continually ask themselves: “What should children be doing that best serves their development in the long term? In what ways can I best help to facilitate the continued development of my students?”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>For more information on this topic, refer to: Lilian G. Katz and Sylvia C. Chard, *Engaging Children's Minds: The Project Approach*. (Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corp. 1989.)



## Why must educators be knowledgeable in both areas of child development?

Educators, as a general rule, have acquired a substantial background of knowledge of the normative dimensions of childhood. For example, they can describe the predictable stages of development in reading or writing of the children they teach. However, knowing the typical stages of development is not enough. Children will not develop to their potential if we simply sit back and let development happen. Knowing the stages of growth and development, knowing what development logically should follow at a certain stage, means teachers can prepare the learning situation so that positive growth will be facilitated. Instruction can be planned that challenges the learner to take the next step in his or her learning. Knowledge of human development also helps educators design the overall appropriate physical, social and emotional environments that support development.

### Seeing the Glass as Half Full

The Program Continuity Policy supports educational practices that are consistent with principles of child development. Therefore it encourages educators to focus on what children **can do**, not what they can **not**. It is necessary to view the child, not as deficient, or half empty, but as having developed a set of abilities, therefore half full.

By knowing what a child is able to do, and what logically should follow (*normative dimension*), teachers can plan appropriate learning activities that prompt or provoke development to happen. This is the dynamic dimension that educators need to continually reflect upon in their day to day teaching.



## Planning Developmentally Appropriate Activities

The following activity demonstrates the interplay between the two dimensions, and the role of the educator in planning for developmentally appropriate activities. Fill in Columns I and III first, followed by II after reflection. After reading the examples, complete the chart with ideas from your own teaching background. If this is done as a group activity, share your ideas.

<b>I</b> Describe What Child <b>Can Do</b> (Normative Dimension)	<b>II</b> Developmentally Appropriate Practice That Prompts III ➔ (Dynamic Dimension)	<b>III</b> Describe What Child <b>Can Do Next</b>
1. Child has sense of story— identifies Beginning, Middle, End.	Reader's workshop, small group discussion, retelling in own words, rewriting in own words, story grammar	Uses Beginning, Middle, End in writing
2. Tally information from a verbal survey	Explore and practise structure of bar, circle, pictorial graphs using manipulatives	Child selects suitable graph form to communicate information
3.		
4.		
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The previous activity should become a natural part of an educator's day. Reflective practitioners think about the sequences and stages of learning, the impact of practices on later learning and the cumulative effect of repeated experiences over time on a learner. It is not intended that you respond in writing every day. However, purposeful reflection will help ensure that practices consistent with the principles of child development are in place.

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## What's Your Kid Q?

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The *Kid Q* tests your knowledge of the normative dimension of child development<sup>2</sup>. The purpose of the quiz is to get you thinking about the children ages 8 to 11 that you teach. There are four sections that will assist you in reviewing and updating your knowledge of:

- Physical Development
- Intellectual Development
- Language Development
- Social/Emotional Development

There are several ways that the *Kid Q* can be administered. It can be used at a staff meeting with one person directing the activity on an overhead. Group discussion, linking theory to practice, can follow, providing a framework for looking at current programming and curriculum in your school.

The *Kid Q* lends itself to professional development workshops. The test can be displayed on overhead or distributed in print to each participant, administered, then followed by group discussion. The session can last 1 to 2 hours depending on the time allowed for discussion.

The *Kid Q* can also be used with parents. Sharing information about development and appropriate programming helps to build and support the home/school partnership, which is an important aspect of the Program Continuity Policy. Workshops with parents usually occur in the evening and can take 1 to 2 hours. The school's program can be related to principles of child development and discussed during the quiz.

The *Kid Q* can also be taken individually as a self-evaluative and reflective activity.

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<sup>2</sup>The test was constructed using the following resource: *The Toronto Observation Project: Observing Children Through Their Formative Years*. (Toronto, ON: The Board of Education for the City of Toronto, 1980.)



## How to Find Out Your Kid Q

1. Answer the questions in one section.
2. Check your responses with the correct answers.
3. After checking your answers, complete the section “How does this translate into classroom practice?”
4. For additional information, refer to the other Links suggested.

## My Score

**Physical** \_\_\_\_\_ (of a possible 10)

**Intellectual** \_\_\_\_\_ (of a possible 10)

**Language** \_\_\_\_\_ (of a possible 10)

**Social Emotional** \_\_\_\_\_ (of a possible 10)

**My Kid Q Score** \_\_\_\_\_ (of a possible 40)

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## Section 1: Physical Development Ages 8 - 11

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1. About how many months ahead of boys in development are girls?  
(0-9) (9-15) (16-24)
2. Who are more developed in strength and coordination, boys or girls?
3. Right/Left dominance usually is established by age 9. T or F?
4. "Normal" vision usually develops during this period of development.  
T or F?
5. Typically children have high energy levels, yet tire easily. T or F?
6. Hearing is sufficiently developed to enable fine auditory discrimination before age 8. T or F?
7. By what age are sensory integration and coordination usually reached?
8. There is typically a spurt of growth before puberty (ages 10-11 for boys; 9-10 for girls). T or F?
9. Wrist bones are well developed by age 8, allowing for greater flexibility, dexterity and fine control. T or F?
10. The period of relative calm called "latency" occurs between 7-9 years or 9-11 years?

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**STOP!**

***You Have Finished Section 1***

***Check Your Answers***

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## Section 1:

### Answers

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1. Girls are approximately **9 to 15** months ahead of boys in physical development. For this reason there may be some gender differences in attainment of some skills and concepts.
2. **Boys** may be more developed in strength and coordination. Teachers should provide activities that allow for development of both strength and coordination, specifically in physical education. Care should be taken to avoid “boys against the girls” competitions.
3. **True.** Between the ages of 7-9 Right/Left dominance becomes more firmly established. R/L is understood as a relationship by most children. Between 9-11 dominance is established. R/L dominance plays a significant role in the development of both reading and writing. Frequent activities to establish Left/Right tracking of print, directionality (top/bottom, across, left and right) remain necessary.
4. **True.** Most children develop “normal” vision between the ages of 7-9. Between the ages of 4-7, children are typically far-sighted. As a result, children need to have access to large print in the room at all times. This includes reading material, directions, and anything on the chalkboard, overhead, labels and charts. Teachers should take this factor into consideration when designing seating arrangements. When a child is experiencing difficulties with school work, ensure that routine eye exams have been done.
5. **True.** Children have high energy levels but can still tire easily. Generally students want to complete tasks and can concentrate for longer periods of time on a single activity. Teachers need to allow enough time over a long period for students to complete work. Late in the phase both boys and girls may be fidgety and squirmy.
6. **False.** Hearing in some children is not sufficiently developed to enable fine auditory discrimination until approximately 8 years of age. Repeated and frequent practice is necessary to establish sound/symbol relationships, memory of rhymes, songs and shared readings. Teachers need to accept a wide range of development in both auditory discrimination and memory.
7. By **age 10** the senses become well integrated and coordinated. Teachers can expect students to absorb knowledge in a variety of ways and should use a variety of presentation styles in their teaching. Students are able to sustain their interests, to perfect skills if they are given practice, and to complete tasks. Long-term integrated units of study support this kind of development. See Link 2 on “Learning Style Inventory” and Link 4, “Thematic Planning.”



8. **True.** A spurt of growth before puberty, between the ages of 10-11 in boys and 9-10 in girls typically occurs. During these spurts tremendous energy is consumed and students may often complain of being hungry.
9. **False.** Wrist bones are well developed between the ages of 9-11. Teachers need to accept a wide range of development in fine motor skills—printing, writing, keyboarding and arts. Girls typically are more advanced than boys. Opportunity and activities to develop fine motor skills should allow time for rest, as students may still tire easily. Practice for writing/printing should be an integrated part of meaningful activities in all subject areas. Care should be taken to avoid disconnected practice of these skills.
10. Latency occurs between the ages of **9-11**. This period of relative calm is an ideal time to focus on skill development. Students will never be more agile than at this stage and can learn many new skills, particularly in physical education.

### Linking Theory to Practice

Refer to your responses, the answers supplied, and your discussion (if done in groups). Brainstorm appropriate practices and other considerations that the information implies. Reflect on both the *normative* and *dynamic* dimensions of development as it relates to your teaching situation.

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## Section 2: Intellectual Development Ages 8 - 11

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1. According to Piaget's principles, what type of thinking becomes well established during this age range?
2. Children are less egocentric, therefore touch and movement are not as important to learning. T or F?
3. During this stage the child can distinguish between reality and fantasy. T or F?
4. Action usually precedes thinking. T or F?
5. Children can focus on detail and still keep the whole in mind. T or F?
6. Real objects are no longer necessary to assist reasoning. T or F?
7. By age 9 children are able to reverse thought—they understand that actions can undo previous actions. T or F?
8. The ability to express and receive ideas in symbolic forms—pictures, words, and numerals—greatly increases between the ages of 7-9 or 9-11?
9. Early in this developmental phase children have no difficulty distinguishing between their own ideas and fact. T or F?
10. Students between the ages of 9-11 can make and carry out plans. T or F?

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**STOP!**  
***You Have Finished Section 2***  
***Check Your Answers***

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## Section 2: Answers

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1. **Operational thought** becomes well established during this time. Children still require real objects to manipulate and examine. They need opportunities to solve problems in a variety of ways with a variety of manipulatives. With any new concept they will need access to materials that will allow time for exploration and direct hands-on experience. See “List of Manipulatives”, Link 2.
2. **False.** Although children are less egocentric during this time touch and movement are still important to learning. In all curriculum areas teachers need to plan for, and make available, manipulative and direct experiences.
3. **True.** Children can distinguish between reality and fantasy. Teachers may use literature, audio/visual materials and discussion examples as vehicles for further developing students’ understanding of this distinction.
4. **False.** At this age students’ thinking becomes more purposeful. Movement and actions are less random. Teachers need to model and verbalize steps in problem solving in all curriculum areas. Students can begin to think and plan out actions, therefore they can use manipulatives to solve a mathematical problem. They can design the steps to perform an experiment in science, or administer a survey in social studies.
5. **True.** Children at this age can focus on detail and still keep the whole in mind. With direction they can analyze literature, their own writing, problems in science and math, detail in the arts. When teaching specific skills, teachers have to relate them back to the original purpose. Children need details and parts connected back to the “whole” so that meaning is established and maintained. Practice of specific skills should happen within the context of the whole, not as an isolated activity.
6. **False.** Real objects are necessary to assist reasoning and deal with higher level concepts. In order for students to bridge to abstract thought they first need to manipulate real objects or have direct experiences.
7. **True.** By age 9 most children are able to reverse their thought. They understand that actions can undo previous actions. Students are now able to reflect on past events, predict change and anticipate outcomes. The ability to use a number line and to learn basic facts develops with the ability to reverse thought. Children will begin to see relationships between the operations and develop the idea of inverse operations (subtraction is the inverse of addition). Teachers will need to provide direct instruction, modelling, and practice for students to internalize these thought processes.



8. Between **7 - 9** years of age children's ability to express and receive ideas in symbolic forms—pictures, words, and numerals—greatly increases. Teachers need to capitalize on this by surrounding children with print. All experiences should be attached to symbols, whether it be pictures, words, or numerals. See Link 3, "Building a Literate Environment."
9. **False.** Early in the phase children may have difficulty distinguishing between their own ideas and fact. Teachers must provide experiences and practice for children to distinguish between their own personal perceptions and ideas, and facts. Curriculum areas that lend themselves to this kind of activity are social studies, health, and language.
10. **True.** Children are capable of making and carrying out their own plans. Daily opportunities for students to initiate, plan, and carry out their plans are necessary. At the beginning of the year teachers need to model, role play and practice this process. See Link 2 on "Goal Setting."

### Linking Theory to Practice

Refer to your responses, the answers supplied, and your discussion (if done in groups). Brainstorm appropriate practices and other considerations that the information implies. Reflect on both the *normative* and *dynamic* dimensions of development as it relates to your teaching situation.

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### Section 3:

## Language Development

### Ages 8 - 11

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1. Children are able to listen to other points of view. T or F?
2. At what age are children able to “read to learn”; i.e., begin to use content material independently? 7-9 or 9-11?
3. At what age can children be hampered by concern for spelling and punctuation in their writing? 7-9 or 9-11?
4. Children have difficulty reading silently. T or F?
5. Children are able to engage in discussions and argument. T or F?
6. Oral reading becomes more difficult at what age? 7-9 or 9-11?
7. In the early stages children have difficulty listening critically for main idea and sequence. T or F?
8. Children may still need to rely on their eye/voice/ear link and track the print using their finger up until age 9. T or F?
9. At what age can children begin assessing their own writing? 7-9 or 9-11?
10. It is often too late to improve speech habits by age 11. T or F?

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***STOP!***

***You Have Finished Section 3.***

***Check Your Answers.***

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## Section 3:

### Answers

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1. **True.** Children are able to listen to other points of view. Opportunities for discussions in pairs, small groups, and as part of a whole class are essential so that students can acquire this necessary skill. Teachers will need to instruct, model, and role play before practice occurs. After discussions the class should debrief so that they can learn from the activity and from their peers. See Link 2, “Physical Environment.”
2. Between the ages of **9-11** most children can “read to learn” independently. Many children are capable of this at an earlier age as well. It is important that children have access to content material in their classroom and are allowed frequent visits to the library. As well, teachers need to teach strategies for reading factual material. Reading strategies should be integrated into all curriculum areas. See Alberta Education’s *Diagnostic Reading Program (1986)*.
3. Between the ages of **7-9** children can be hampered in their writing if too much concern is placed on correct punctuation and spelling. Children need to know during what part of the writing process the concern for spelling and punctuation is necessary. The writing program should place emphasis on first draft work where ideas and content are critical. In subsequent drafts children need instruction and assistance in editing for punctuation and spelling. See Link 3, “Building a Literate Environment.”
4. **False.** Children can begin to read silently between the ages of 7-9. As the difficulty of material increases, children will need to rely on their eye/voice/ear link and finger pointing. A wide range of reading material needs to be available for children. Daily uninterrupted reading periods, for which children can select their own materials for enjoyment and practice, are essential.
5. **True.** Given instruction and practice in whole group, small group and pair activities, children can learn to engage in both discussion and argument. Their ability to argue a point of view increases with their ability to take another point of view. They become able to use more explicit language and they can discriminate between ideas and examples, and evidence and argument. The social studies curriculum lends itself to debates, which would provide an appropriate vehicle for practice.
6. Between the ages of **9-11** oral reading becomes more difficult. Silent reading rates increase very quickly and surpass oral reading rates as a result. When asked to read out loud, children have to slow down their reading and rely on eye/voice/ear links. This typically results in more miscues by the reader. Teachers must not use oral reading exclusively for evaluation purposes. “Round robin reading”, where each child waits for her turn to read individually, should be avoided. This technique does not maximize overall reading time/practice for students. Furthermore, it can cause great anxiety for students. Supportive paired reading, small group reading, sustained silent reading, and whole class experiences are more beneficial and appropriate.



7. **False.** Children can listen critically for the main idea and sequence in a story in the earliest stages. Teachers need to provide activities that help children develop strategies for locating main ideas and sequencing. Story Grammar Grids are excellent tools. See Link 3 and Alberta Education's *Diagnostic Reading Program*.
8. **True.** Children may still need to rely on eye/voice/ear link and finger pointing up until the age of 9. As children develop more reading strategies there will be less need to finger point and labour over details of the print. Daily uninterrupted reading periods are necessary to allow children to engage in reading materials of their choice.
9. Between the ages of 7-9 children can begin assessing their own writing. Teachers need to instruct, model and provide opportunities for children to look critically at their own writing. Criteria need to be established and explained to the students. Peer editing groups and author circles can also help with self-assessment. See Link 3.
10. **False.** Children can consciously appraise and improve their speech habits. They become capable of explicit, more objective language. Given opportunity to practice speech (presentations, debate, discussions, shared readings) children can focus and improve on various aspects of their speech. Specific supportive feedback from peers and teachers will assist students in self-appraisal, and growth.

## Linking Theory to Practice

Refer to your responses, the answers supplied, and your discussion (if done in groups). Brainstorm appropriate practices and other considerations that the information implies. Reflect on both the *normative* and *dynamic* dimensions of development as it relates to your teaching situation.

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## Section 4: Social/Emotional Development Ages 8 - 11

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1. Typically children develop perseverance, although interests may be short-lived. T or F?
2. Satisfaction is not achieved through sharing and cooperation, but rather from individual success. T or F?
3. What is the strongest influence on a child in terms of social development at this age? peer, adult or teacher?
4. Early in this phase children accept authority and rules. They remain dependent on adult authority. T or F?
5. Conflicts are often settled physically rather than verbally. T or F?
6. Early in this phase children typically obey for fear of disapproval. T or F?
7. "Gang" spirit and peer influence begins between 7-9 or 9-11 years of age?
8. Late in this stage children are typically anxious to win. T or F?
9. Children begin challenging authority at about what age? 9, 10 or 11?
10. Late in the stage children are able to organize activities and develop their own rules. T or F?

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**STOP!**  
**You Have Finished Section 4.**  
**Check Your Answers**

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## Section 4:

### Answers

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1. **True.** Children typically develop perseverance. Although students' interests may be short-lived, teachers need to provide time in their plans to allow children to complete projects of interest. Some free choice of projects, investigations and writing is necessary.
2. **False.** Children get tremendous satisfaction through sharing and cooperating. Typically the peer group becomes important and close friendships with the same sex develop. Children realize that by sharing and cooperating common goals can be reached. Teachers need to provide plenty of opportunities for children to work in pairs and small groups. Explicit instruction, modelling, role play and practice need to occur for cooperative group learning to be successful.
3. **Peers** are the strongest influence on a child in terms of social development at this age.
4. **True.** Early in this phase children accept authority and rules. They can remain dependent on adult authority. Teachers need to provide guidance to children when developing class expectations. Input from students in this process is important so that they feel ownership in the class and the way it functions. In this way they develop independence and responsibility. See Link 2, "Setting the Class Creed."
5. **False.** Children will often settle conflicts verbally. As they become more aware of how to argue they will try to solve problems using words instead of fists. Practice in role play (Health) will provide children with strategies to settle their own conflicts.
6. **True.** Early in the phase children typically obey for fear of disapproval. However, it does not take long before children begin to challenge authority. For this reason teachers need to include children in the process of setting classroom expectations, behaviour, and consequences. See Link 2, "Setting the Class Creed."
7. "Gang" spirit and peer influence begins typically between the ages of **9-11**. Children want to be like others and this can foster both positive and negative behaviour. Children's interests by the end of Grade 6 are predominantly social. Groups of the same sex form strong bonds, but change often.
8. **True.** Late in this stage children are typically anxious to win. Teachers need to be conscious of organizing fair and sensible competitions for students to participate in. Cooperative learning activities should be used as well.



9. By **age 11** children typically challenge authority. See #6.
10. **True.** Late in this stage children are able to organize activities and develop their own rules. Opportunities in all curriculum areas should be planned to capitalize on this development.

### Linking Theory to Practice

Refer to your responses, the answers supplied, and your discussion (if done in groups). Brainstorm appropriate practices and other considerations that the information implies. Reflect on both the *normative* and *dynamic* dimensions of development as it relates to your teaching situation.

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## Summary

Developmentally appropriate practice means teaching whole students. The Program Continuity Policy supports practices that balance all aspects of development according to their needs, across all the developmental dimensions. Teachers facilitate learning by knowing and being aware of the typical stages of development and planning appropriate instruction that fosters growth. This Link provided some background information on the normative dimension of human development between the ages of 8-11. It also encouraged reflection on the dynamic dimension—what can we as educators do that best serves development in the long term?



## Link 2

### Creating an Effective Environment





## Creating an Effective Environment

For the learning environment to be described as “developmentally appropriate”, it has to reflect what we know about children. The appropriate use of classroom space is, therefore, an important aspect of the Program Continuity Policy.

When establishing the classroom environment, teachers need to reflect on the developmental needs of their students and incorporate this knowledge into the physical plan of the learning environment. Link 2 contains hands-on activities for planning and building appropriate physical spaces for children.

Teachers need to consider more than just the physical design of the class when designing the environment, since the emotional ambience of classroom life and the relationship between student and teacher have a significant effect on learning<sup>1</sup>. Included in this Link are ideas for establishing the social/emotional climate of the classroom. Creating an effective environment, one that meets the needs of the whole child, is an essential aspect of the Program Continuity Policy.

Two key statements from the Program Continuity Policy will be developed in this Link:

- Creating effective environments can help teachers establish continuity from grade to grade and year to year for children.
- Effective design, built around knowledge of how students learn, helps develop programming that is consistent with principles of child development.

You will be asked to complete five activities in this link.

<sup>1</sup>Guide to Education: Elementary School Handbook ECS to Grade 6



## **1. “Me—an Interior Designer!”**

Interior designers consider a number of important factors before designing any space. You will be analyzing these factors before tackling your own classroom.

## **2. “Yes, but...”**

Interior designers are often faced with less than ideal conditions and many limitations when designing space. Teachers have long struggled with less than ideal classroom space. Space, materials, and resources pose ongoing problems. You will be asked to go through a “Yes, but...” activity to get you thinking about solving potential problems in your own classroom.

## **3. Designing the Physical Environment**

In this section you will design your classroom space for the year. You may want to plan several spaces to reflect the changing needs of your students throughout the year. You may also want to incorporate your ideas from the “Yes, but...” section. Your students also have ideas about the physical environment, and you may want to seek their input for this activity.

## **4. Creating a Positive Social/Emotional Environment**

In this section ideas that enhance student self-esteem, responsibility and independence will be shared.

## **5. Rethinking Learning Centres**

Ideas from classrooms across the province are shared with you.

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## Section 1: “Me—An Interior Designer!”

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Before designing any space, interior designers consider four main dimensions.

1. **People**
2. **Space**
3. **Things**
4. **Time**

### **People**

You must know as much as possible about your clients—in this case the children who will be in your room. The design of the space must be developmentally appropriate to meet your clients’ needs, and must be consistent with the principles of child development.

Complete the “Kid Q” found in Link 1 if you have not already done so. Below are some important considerations about the people in your space. After doing the “Kid Q” you may want to add to the list.

- touch and movement and the use of manipulatives are essential to learning
- children are social beings—group interaction will be essential
- children need opportunities and space to work cooperatively, independently, and as a whole group
- children have a variety of learning styles
- children need access to print
- children need opportunities to organize and develop their own activities.

Other considerations specific to your clients:

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## Space

Interior designers must consider the actual physical space they are dealing with. For example, any architectural features that inhibit or enhance the design must be considered. Another important factor in the utilization of space is traffic flow. Consider the following factors before you design your space. Make sure you add the specific space limitations or potentials of your own room.

- Decide on a central focus for whole class instruction.
- Decide on a whole class gathering area (this may be the same as above); make it warm and inviting (rocking-chair, pillows).
- Movement will be essential—are there pathways to move to the door, the materials access area, to small group areas, centres?
- Are there spaces that invite individuals to do independent work?
- Consider the placement of windows, sinks, bulletin and chalk boards, carpet/lino areas, class library, shelving and other non-moveable features.
- Are there areas for free exploration with manipulatives?
- Can children access these materials?
- Is there storage available?

Space considerations specific to your room:

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## Things

Interior designers consider all of the things that must be placed in a space. Before the actual design of the space is undertaken, an inventory of the things required in the design is essential. Once this list is finalized, the designer begins to manipulate the placement of things to come up with an ideal arrangement in terms of space utilization and traffic flow. If all of the homework on understanding clients' needs has been done in the "people" section, then the result should be a developmentally appropriate classroom.

- How many actual bodies will be in the room?
- Will they be seated at desks, paired tables, larger tables or a combination? (see pros and cons at the end of this section)
- Where will materials/manipulatives be stored, taking up the least amount of space, but with easy access?
- Where will centres be set up?
- Is there space for on-going projects to be stored?
- Where will children store their materials?
- Can storage areas be used to section off room space, creating areas for individual or small group work?
- Is there provision for quiet work space?
- Is there an area where a class library can be established?
- Can pieces of furniture serve more than one purpose?
- Where will you put the teacher desk if you use one?
- Is the space arranged to reduce distractibility for those who need it?
- How will audio visual materials be stored and utilized?

Specific considerations of the "things" in your space:

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## Things the students can't do without

Both the Mathematics Curriculum and the Diagnostic Math Program encourage the use of a variety of manipulatives. The need for them in the classroom can not be overemphasized.

excerpted from *Diagnostic  
Mathematics Program—Elementary,  
1990*. Alberta Education

### Sources of Manipulatives

Manipulatives such as the following may be collected from students and other sources.<sup>2</sup> The asterisk indicates those manipulatives that apply primarily to Division I.

bags—paper*	lace
balls—ping pong, rubber, tennis	macaroni
beads*	marbles
beans	marshmallows
bingo chips	pails—ice cream
blocks—coloured	pipe cleaners
bottles—various sizes	plasticene
bowls—various sizes	plates—paper, plastic*
boxes—various sizes	popsicle sticks
buttons*	ribbon
cans—soup	rice
caps—bottle	rings—coloured
carter pins* (for spinners)	rolls—toilet paper, paper towels
cheerios	skewers—bamboo
cones—ice cream	spoons
containers—milk, yogurt	straws
cotton balls*	string
cubes—sugar, alphabet	tape—adding
cups—paper, cone-shaped, portion	ties—bread, garbage bag*
dice	thimbles
discs	tiles*
egg cartons	toothpicks*
hats—party	yarn
jugs—plastic	

## Things you can't do without

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<sup>2</sup>Commercial manipulatives can be purchased from the Learning Resources Distributing Centre  
12360—142 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T5L 4X9  
Phone: (403) 427-2767 Fax (403) 422-9750



## **The Pros and Cons of Desks and Tables**

It doesn't really matter which you select—what counts is the way they are used to enhance instruction/learning/interaction. Consider the following points.

### **Desks**

#### *Pros*

- can be arranged in a variety of ways
- can be grouped
- provide storage for student materials

#### *Cons*

- depending on arrangement may decrease interaction between students
- take up more space
- students can grow out of them and be uncomfortable
- take longer to arrange/rearrange

### **Tables**

#### *Pros*

- allow for the greatest interaction and communication between students
- students can be regrouped in a variety of ways, quickly
- lend themselves to group work and stations

#### *Cons*

- may necessitate finding alternative storage for student materials
- some students may have difficulty working independently when seated in a larger group.

## Time

Finally, consider the amount of time available, and how time is to be used by your clients. Consider your scheduling needs when planning and designing your environment.

If you are doing some integrated thematic planning you may need to consider the following time-related factors:

- areas for working on continuing projects
- areas for long term display/storage of materials specific to a theme
- whether the space will be shared by any other teacher or groups of students.

Now that you are thinking like an interior designer, let's summarize before moving on to the next step.

1. When designing classroom space effectively, your design should express a sound teaching philosophy.
2. This philosophy is built on specific knowledge of child development and ways of learning. Know your clients. (See Link 1, "Kid Q") The design must be consistent with principles of child development.
3. Decide on all of the things you want to include in your plan and arrange the space to get the optimum usage.

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## Section 2: “Yes, But...”

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### Every Teacher’s Fantasy

You have been given the best classroom in your school, with an average number of students. Knowing the developmental characteristics of the children you teach, design the ideal classroom environment on the blank page provided. Don't limit your imagination. If you have seen things in other schools or classrooms (any grade level) that you would like to incorporate into your plan, do so. If you are working in groups, share your design.

### Let’s Face Reality

Fantasy aside, most teachers have less than an ideal situation. The following brainstorming activities will help you come up with solutions to the most common problems teachers encounter when designing classroom space. If this is done as a group activity, share your ideas. Continually add to your list of solutions. You never know when you might be asked to switch classrooms.

### Scenario: Large Class Size

You have been given the class with the greatest enrolment. That means a lot of bodies. Before brainstorming your list of possible solutions, consider the following:

- Where will the students be sitting? seating arrangement?
- Where will the students be storing their materials?
- Which large pieces of furniture and centres do you want to keep? List priorities.

#### Solutions

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*(See the end of this section for other possible solutions.)*

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## The Ideal Classroom

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## Scenario: No Storage

You have been given the classroom with no counter space and no storage. What are you going to do with all of your “stuff” and the children’s “stuff”?

### Solutions

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*(See the end of this section for other possible solutions.)*

## Scenario: Small Classroom

You have been given the smallest classroom in the school. You will have to be very creative in your use of space.

### Solutions

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*(See the end of this section for other possible solutions.)*

## Scenario: No Money

Your class budget has been cut back and there are no funds to get the necessary or wanted materials for your class this year. Other than solving your problems through fundraising activities by parents, what else can you do?



### **Solutions**

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*(See the end of this section for other possible solutions.)*

### **Scenario: Sharing Your Classroom With Other Teachers**

Your school is departmentalized and you have to share your classroom with other teachers.

### **Solutions**

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*(See the end of this section for other possible solutions.)*

### **Some Suggestions**

#### **Large Enrolment**

- Seat children in groups to allow for an open large group area.
- See if you can put centres in the hallway (check fire codes).
- Use moveable carts for storage—store outside of classroom.
- Build centres into cupboards and store materials elsewhere.
- Consider the possibility of using tables instead of desks—storage underneath for student materials.
- Use “prop” boxes to store theme-related materials.
- Provide lap boards/placemats and allow students to use floor space if they wish (thus reducing numbers of tables and chairs).
- Consider table-top mini-centres using collapsible, tri-fold displays.

**No Storage**

- Set priorities on what supplies must be kept in the classroom.
- Establish routines for retrieval of supplies outside of the class. Ask for storage containers from home—tubs, crates, etc.
- Build high shelves that don't use "child space" for teacher materials. Seek space outside of classroom.

**Small Classroom**

- Build drop-down shelves for centres using chains/cup hooks.
- Hang materials from the ceiling (check regulations).
- Use moveable curtains to make room dividers or to divide spaces for individual and small group work.
- Use stackable storage.
- Set up moveable centres on carts that can be taken in and out of the classroom.
- Storage that serves two purposes—bookshelf can be used as a counter space and back side can be used as display or centre.
- Consider using the library as a centre or work station.

**No Budget**

- Hit local businesses for materials that they may be discarding that can be of use in the classroom.
- Get parent volunteers to create things.
- Send letters to the home asking for donations of needed materials.
- Consider pursuing a corporate sponsor (check your local Chamber of Commerce).

**Sharing a Classroom**

- Consider sharing or eliminating teacher's desk—use moveable file carts for materials.
- Do integrated team planning so that themes and resources are combined.

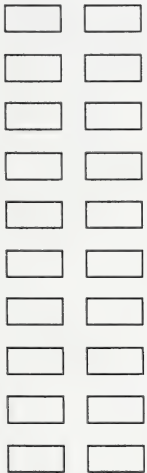
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## Section 3: Designing the Physical Environment

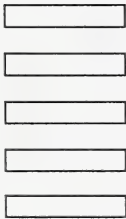
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Now that you are both skilled as an interior designer and have had some practice with solving design problems, it is time to go to work on your own classroom.

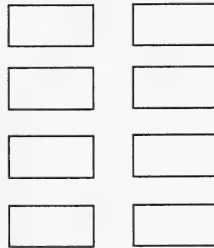
Draw your room shape on a blank sheet. Then photocopy this page and the next, and cut apart furnishings to design your classroom. The cut apart furnishings will allow you to manipulate and change the space while saving your muscles. If necessary, refer back to the four dimensions of space design before starting.



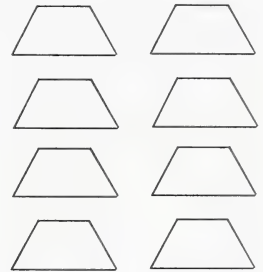
desks



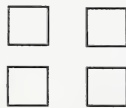
book shelves



tables



tables



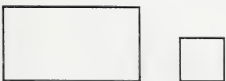
tables



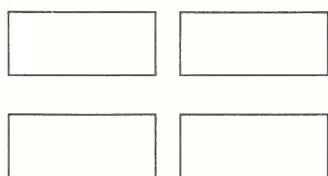
tables



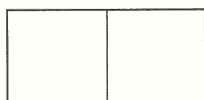
moveable desks



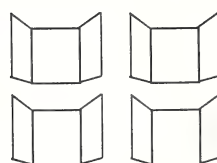
teacher's desk & filing cabinet



moveable storage



sand/water table



centres



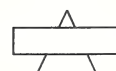
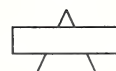
record player



overhead cart



sink



easels



listening centre



screen



loft

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## Section 4:

# Creating a Positive Social and Emotional Environment

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Creating an environment that enhances student self-esteem, responsibility and independence is an important aspect of the Program Continuity Policy. A healthy social and emotional environment fosters growth in all areas of development, and the following section includes examples of teaching practices that provide such an environment.

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This assignment is given to students during the first week of school. It remains an on-going reflective activity for the year. It was designed to give students responsibility, ownership, and strategies for organizing their school year.

Pieter Grobler, teacher  
Banff Elementary School  
Banff S.D. #102

### Assignment 1 “Organizing My Life”

After thinking about it carefully, write detailed statements about your plans to organize your life this year. You are to do five of these, one plan each for School, Friendship, Family, Sports or Hobby, and Other. Each plan must be organized in this way:

#### A) Goal Statement

Here you say exactly what you want to achieve or improve. Expand this statement as much as you can; consult your parents for ideas.

#### B) Why I Want to Achieve It

In this section, you must state precisely why you want to improve or achieve your stated goal. Mention what benefits—all the ones you can think of—you will derive from achieving your goal. You can also mention here the present condition that you want to get out of, or improve. Remember, any well-formulated plan always has several reasons motivating it. Each reason should be stated clearly, and separated from the other, for example, by enumerating it. This numbering in itself shows good organization, and is an important step toward achieving your goals.

#### C) Action Plan

This is a very important section. Any goal without an action statement cannot possibly be achieved. It is here where you say HOW you plan to achieve your stated goal. You must make some mention of time when you will be doing it, and in some cases, where. The “where” part shows a really well-organized person. Remember, you are going to try to form a new habit—being well organized. To help you form this new habit, it’s good to do things at a set time and a regular place. This is the “when” and “where.”

#### D) Evaluation

This section will be done periodically, e.g., at the end of each month. You must be very honest here and judge to what extent you have reached your stated goal, and where you have not. This is a long section where you say why you haven’t progressed as well as you had hoped to when you first wrote your plan. State here also how you could overcome these difficulties before the next evaluation period. In other words, how you will have to change your how, when, where—action plan—in order to get back on track.



Following is one student's sample over a two month period.

Joey De Michele  
Student of P. Grobler  
Banff Elementary School

Sept 18

Progress Report

Goal #1

School

A) I have improved my chatting habit but I still think it needs more work and I want to achieve this goal before Christmas holidays.

Family

A) This certain goal is simple for me to accomplish and I already have.

Sports

I'm in idriland training I do alot of running and idriland is almost every day and the days that there is no idriland I run after school.

Friendship

A) I have not gotten into any fights with friends yet.

School

I have been improving my chatting habit but I may get rid of it much sooner than christmas.

Progress Report 1990/10/7

Friendship

I haven't gotten in any fights yet except with mariana but that was just for whose house to play at.

Sports

my sports goal was to go up a run regularly but I was doing fine until I fell off my bike and hurt my leg.

School

(A) I want to stop chatting with friends during class and wait till recess or lunch.

(B) I want to achieve it because then I won't get into trouble with mr. Grobler.

(C) When someone trying to talk to me I'll say not now I'll talk at recess.

Family

(A) my goal is to do things without being told to.

(B) I want to achieve it because then my mom won't have to nag me.

(C) on every monday I'll remind myself and then when I get home from school I'll do it.

Sports

(A) This year my goal is to run regularly.

(B) I want to achieve it cause when you get older you get fatter.

(C) on Sunday afternoon I go jogging but she won't remind myself I'll write a sign saying "go jogging".

Friendship

(A) my friendship goal is to not get into any fights with friends.

(B) why I want to achieve it is because fights are really immature.

(C) My plan is when I'm about to get into a fight I'm going to walk away.

In conjunction with this goal setting and evaluation, students are also asked to fill out their own report card each term. This self-evaluation is brought to the interview to be shared with both parents and teacher. It is then discussed in light of the teacher's report card. Further goal setting takes place at the interview with all stakeholders involved—student, parent, and teacher.

Stavros Carlos, student  
Banff Elementary School

<u>French</u> Effort <table border="1"><tr><td>S</td></tr></table> Achievement <table border="1"><tr><td></td></tr></table> <u>Stavros has good pronunciation and participates in class and class work</u>	S		<u>Self-Evaluation</u> <u>Report Card</u>  <u>Stavros Karlos</u>
S			

<u>Math</u> Effort <table border="1"><tr><td>S</td></tr></table> Achievement <table border="1"><tr><td></td></tr></table> <u>Stavros likes math and works hard but he does have some trouble with homework</u>	S		<u>Language</u> Effort <table border="1"><tr><td>S</td></tr></table> Achievement <table border="1"><tr><td></td></tr></table> <u>Stavros likes language and participates</u>	S	
S					
S					
<u>Social</u> Effort <table border="1"><tr><td>E</td></tr></table> Achievement <table border="1"><tr><td></td></tr></table> <u>Stavros shows a great interest in social and likes the different studies we do in it</u>	E		<u>Reading</u> Effort <table border="1"><tr><td>E</td></tr></table> Achievement <table border="1"><tr><td></td></tr></table> <u>Stavros shows a great interest in reading and when he picks up a good book he can't put it down. He also shares lots of the book he reads with the class</u>	E	
E					
E					
<u>Science</u> Effort <table border="1"><tr><td>E</td></tr></table> Achievement <table border="1"><tr><td></td></tr></table> <u>Stavros is very active in science and shows a great interest in the studies we are doing</u>	E		<u>Health</u> Effort <table border="1"><tr><td>S</td></tr></table> Achievement <table border="1"><tr><td></td></tr></table> <u>Stavros likes health and participate in the things we do</u>	S	
E					
S					
	<u>Physical Education</u> Eff. <table border="1"><tr><td>E</td></tr></table> Ach. <table border="1"><tr><td></td></tr></table> <u>Stavros shows a great interest in Gym and is very sportive</u>	E			
E					

As well, the teacher sets personal goals for the year. In this way both teachers and students are partners in the classroom community.

## My Goals for the 1990 School Term—Pieter Grobler

During this school year I want to make a concerted effort toward (i) having my students learn how to study and learn, to prepare them for their Junior High schooling years—cf. my How To Learn program; (ii) assisting my students to learn maximally, by identifying the preferred learning style of each and using 4-mat planning to ensure that the teaching strategies I use match all styles; (iii) having my students learn to plan, direct and evaluate their own learning experiences; and (iv) developing responsibility and positive attitudes in my students toward their own learning on the one hand, and toward other members of their school-family and our community on the other.

Generally, my personal teaching plan should be seen as an 'opening up' of possibilities that enable learning—consistent with the goals of education as variously defined by Alberta Education, the Banff School District, and the Banff Elementary School—rather than as merely the management of these expected outcomes.

### 1. How To Learn

My students will be instructed, through a variety of experiences, to learn how to study and learn, and this will be integrated into all subjects. This will include:

- how to take notes
- how to study for a test
- how to write an exam
- how to do library research
- how to write a report.

Toward my objective of having my students acquire the skills of How to Learn, the focus will centre on:

- accessing and retrieval of information
- processing of information, including webbing and note-taking in point form to internalize the information chosen
- information-sharing, i.e. reporting to peers, will be done in every subject.

The following interdisciplinary topics will be dealt with:

- practising for success
- sequencing and scheduling
- planning ahead
- summarizing
- critically evaluating information
- persuasive techniques
- communicating effectively
- solving problems.

An attempt will be made in every subject to apply each concept learned to their lives in the real world to ensure the relevance of what they learned is appreciated.

### 2. Learning Maximally

Toward this end I will be determining the preferred learning style of each of my students. This will be done by administering the Dunn, Dunn & Pratt L.S.I. I will, in addition, become familiar with the 4-mat lesson planning model, and increase its use to plan and expand my repertoire of methods presenting learning experiences to them. The intent is to ensure that each learning style is matched by a teaching strategy I use.

Teaching my students about their and other styles will become my most important learning styles application. This learning will occur through informal debriefing of class activities. Several times each week a few minutes will be taken to talk about the ways that our own styles show in class, i.e. the different ways that different students approach a task, as well as the successes and frustrations they experienced. Besides becoming more aware of their own styles, students will hear how others approach similar problems, and thereby students can add new

strategies to their repertoires. This style of debriefing will be done often when students work cooperatively. We will use style to understand why it's easier to work with some of their classmates than with others.

Formal instruction in learning styles will be provided too, by using material from: *No Sweat! How to Use Your Learning Style to Be a Better Student*, by Ulrich and Guild. The results of the L.S.I. will not only provide a label for each style preference, but provide them with information concerning their ideal study environment.

This focus on learning styles will benefit my students in many ways. They will gain confidence in their strengths and develop methods to cope with challenging situations that may arise. They will see how they learn most effectively and efficiently, reinforcing their self-directed learning efforts, and thereby being better able to take responsibility for their own learning. Students will also learn that their ways are no better or worse than those of their peers—they are simply different.

### 3. Skills for Growing

My mission states: "Through developing positive self-esteem, students will meet the challenge of the future..."

By presenting a variety of experiences that develop and heighten an awareness of their own and others' self-esteem, my students will be taught, and given opportunities to practise, the basic social skills. Program materials will be drawn from the *Project Self-Esteem* manual, the *Kids Helping Kids* manual, and the *Lions' Skills for Growing* manual. From these I have chosen the following skills:

- making choices
- recognizing & responding to feelings of others
- self-talk and self-encouragement
- guidelines on the choice of joining groups
- setting their own priorities
- strategies on how to be assertive
- a goal-setting program: Organizing My Life.

In the crucial elementary school years a child's personality is shaped by the quality of their interactions with others. Certain skills are needed to work successfully with others, and to ensure more fulfilling lives. These are the skills of listening, sharing, resolving conflicts, showing appreciation and accepting responsibility—or, in a word, establishing caring relationships. I believe that these skills can be taught and learned; (Research, cf. Piaget)... interpersonal skills develop in stages, one stage building on another—a sequential process, through which different children move at different rates. I further believe that a child's total environment, i.e. his school and community, (his support system) should have positive role models to support and reassure the children through this growth process.

In providing experiences for my class to develop the skills for growing, we will be using the support system—home, school and community agencies, to teach/reinforce the important life and citizenship skills that follow, within a caring and consistent environment:

- self-discipline
- responsibility
- good judgement
- social interaction skills.

The research indicates that child counsellors can often be as effective as professional counsellors in guiding the behaviour and attitudes of their peers, by role modelling the skills of:




- a heightened awareness of the attributes of others
- effective communication skills
- listening skills, and demonstrating empathy
- questioning skills
- the value clarification process
- confidentiality
- decision making and problem solving skills.

These specific skills will be taught, and practised, using role-playing.

## Malmo School Progress Report and Conference Summary

Parents, students and teachers are all involved in conferences. Before a conference the student fills out his/her own report card. The parent is also asked to fill one out on their child ahead of time. These are then brought to the conference and shared at the same time as the teacher reports. After the conference a summary is filled out by the parent(s), teacher and student. These are placed in the profile binder for future reference.

Malmo Elementary School  
Edmonton Public Schools

MALMO SCHOOL Progress Report and Conference Summary	
Student	
Teacher	<u>Ma Croft</u> Date <u>March 1, 1991</u>
<p>Growth as an Individual/Growth as a Group Member</p> <p><i>I work well with people on above. I always complete my work and do my best at everything. I get along well with other people.</i></p>	
<p>Areas of Success</p> <p><i>I have improved in some areas of math and in french. I have improved in art I think.</i></p>	
<p>Goals for Further Growth</p> <p><i>I want to do better in double division and at science, Punctuation, social and geography.</i></p>	
Student's Signature	Teacher's Signature
	
Parent's Signature	Principal's Signature
 EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS	



Student [redacted] Date March 5/11

Has become less concerned with problems  
and is learning to look for solutions to them  
by himself.  
Hasn't complained anymore about math.

Very good at doing most assignments immediately

- Excellent prompting (including school homework)
- Likes to rearrange room, closets - very creative
- Is never bored - is never happy being uninspired or being alone
- Is an avid reader, watches little TV.

Learn to be more tidy. She loves to create but has to be reminded to clean up her messes

Teacher's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Principal's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

 Springer

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher BILL GODFREY Date MARCH 1991

Christy is a pleasant individual whose confidence fluctuates from activity to activity. She generally has a positive attitude towards her school work and the other students in her class. She cooperates with the students she sits with and she is a good influence on them. She works well with the teacher working alone and with her peers. Christy works slowly and is sometimes reluctant to ask for help. She then ends up waiting and waiting time. She tries hard and is willing to do the work for practice. This is a good attitude to have.

- like are spread of even density! must

[illegible]

eed to the effort in Acts Christ, you can do it. In writing, put down your ideas clear and explain what you mean. Often there is not a right or wrong answer. Justify your answer and have confidence in your ideas.

Teacher's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Principal's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

 EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Following are two other examples of Student Self-evaluation from Millarville Community School.

Dallas Henderson, student  
Millarville Community School  
Foothills S.D. #38

## My Give Away

This is a trap. My own Mini report card. I have to make my own. Now I am scared. I am supposed to tell you that I am doing alright in math, doing the most I can in health. Health is the funnest subject in my week but it only comes on Thursday and Friday.

Then there's Social Studies. Its not too hard. I am doing a good job there and I give it the best shot I can. Oh yes, then there's Phys. Ed. and there are some good things I like. I like doing volleyball, and basketball. Now we are doing gymnastics and that is not my favourite but I can handle it. I have some laughs and I give it my fullest and try hard. Now comes L.A. time, not something I always looked forward to but I do really like some parts and I am starting to like some of my writing now. I'm changing attitude about how I feel about it. I start to have fun when I come to this class.

Music—I have really changed my opinion of playing the recorder. I now enjoy playing. The recorder is something I really like to do.

Art is an alright subject, when we don't have to draw a wooden chair. But otherwise I love drawing and I have lots of fun. Then the computer period. There I am having lots of fun. Now Mark and I are making a magazine about skateboarding and we are purchasing a new computer by our choice.

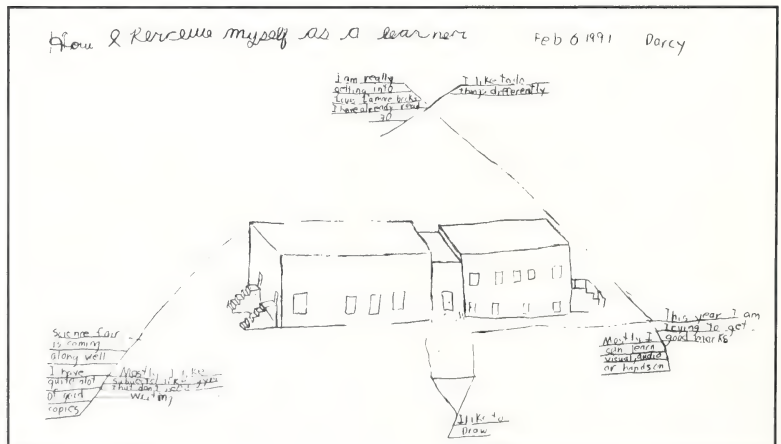
Then there is Environmental Ed. Right now we are doing notes on making lean-tos and snow forts. If we get snowed in on our cross country skiing trip, then we will be prepared. But I'm not really looking forward to it because I am not very good at cross-country skiing and I don't like it.

But over all school is great and a good time and I need my school.

Dallas Henderson  
Millarville Community School

A student's ongoing evaluation of his learning!

Darcy, student  
Millarville Community School



(Darcy's School)

## Setting the Class Creed

Joanne Randall, teacher  
Malmo Elementary School  
Edmonton Public Schools

### Independent Class Project: Classroom Creed

#### Multi-aged Grade 5/6

**Purpose (Objective):** to create an effective learning environment where students take responsibility and ownership for their learning and their behaviour.

**Social Objective:** to encourage and model pro-social behaviours

#### Process:

1. Discuss what the world would be like without law and order and why the need.
2. Share and model previous classroom student created creeds. (Guided Practice)
3. Independent Practice:
  - have each student design a personal creed
4. Cooperative Practice:
  - students get in pairs. Each shares their individual creed. The students then come up with one agreed creed, a compromise between the two students' creed. They each sign the creed.
  - students move to new groups of 4; share their new compromised creed; come up with another compromised creed. They all sign document.
  - the process repeats itself until the students come up with a class-generated creed.
5. The creed is then placed on permanent display. Students and teacher(s) are encouraged to model creed not only in class but out of class. Students are encouraged to encourage each other whenever they see a peer modelling the creed.

Reference to the creed can be made for positive reinforcement or when a student is not demonstrating pro-social skills and needs to be reminded of their responsibility to the creed.

Extension: To reinforce pro-social behaviour for those students whose behaviour is affecting not only their learning but the learning of those around them, have the students create a pro-social booklet.

In this booklet, have students write in the classroom creed. The students then document their pro-social behaviour on a daily basis, listing time and actual pro-social skill they demonstrated. This activity is to assist students to recognize their own pro-social behaviours.

Another component is to have other classmates write in compliments or positive reinforcement of pro-social behaviours they see the child demonstrating both in and out of class. The idea is that recognition and reinforcement of pro-social behaviour is a shared responsibility between teachers and students.

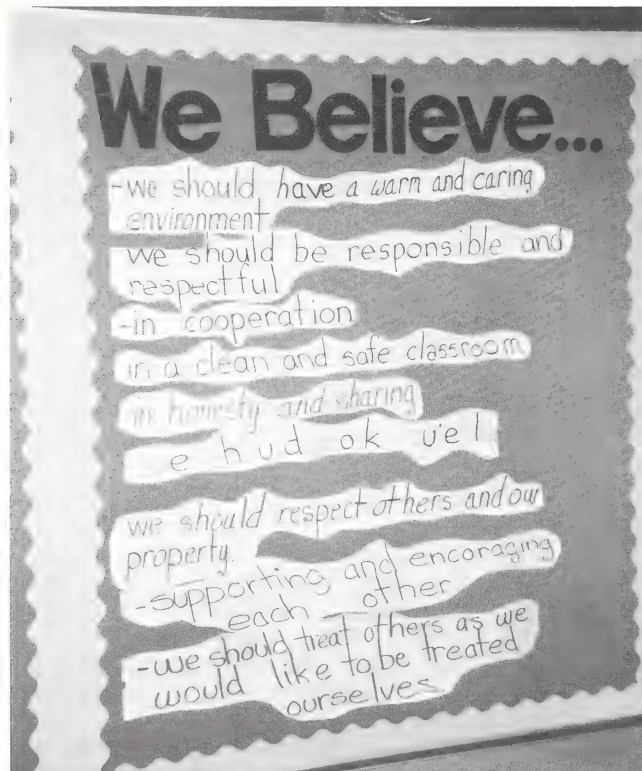
Evaluation: This will be on-going. The positive feature of this co-operative project is the responsibility and ownership it gives to students. It is very much child-centred.

The students are very keen about their pro-social booklets. I wasn't too sure how they would react to it. In their weekly reflections to their parents a good number of them reported what a neat project they were involved in.

Over time I hope to see positive transfer of pro-social behaviour without the use of the booklets. I'll just have to be sensitive to their needs and adjust and re-adjust accordingly. Parent reaction and input will be anticipated and encouraged.

My next initiative is to assist the remaining students in my class on how to deal with behaviour disordered peers.

### Sample Creed



Following is another example of setting the Class Creed. This teacher also chose a cooperative learning strategy. This lesson ensured both group and individual ownership in the Class Creed. When moving into cooperative learning activities it is important to reflect on the areas of success and problems encountered. In this way teachers can revise and make this invaluable teaching strategy more successful.

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Randy Hopkins, teacher  
Woking School  
Spirit River S.D. #47

## Cooperative Group Work Samples

**DATE:** September 5, 1989

**SUBJECT:** Health

**OBJECTIVE:** Each group of students will produce a list of 4-6 rules which they think will help make our classroom a nicer place to be.

**SOCIAL GOAL:** Each student will contribute at least one idea to the list.

**SET:** Lead a discussion on "Why we have laws." Direct the discussion to the classroom and how a set of classroom rules would help make our classroom a nicer place to be.

**DEVELOPMENT:** Tell students they will be working in groups of four. Assure students they will get to work with everyone in the class at some point in the year. Ask the students to find the other members in the class with the same animal on their name tags. Once the students are in their groups give them two minutes to come up with a name for their group.

Explain to the students that we will have two goals for this lesson. Use target on bulletin board. One arrow will state "Make a list of 4-6 classroom rules to make our classroom a nice place to be."

Explain what equal participation is. Show the second arrow and goal, "Everyone in your group must contribute at least one idea to your list." Ask for suggestions as to how the students can make sure everyone participates.

Offer reward: "If every group can show me equal participation we will go outside to play kick ball for the last 15 minutes of the day."

Explain roles and assign to students by the colour of their name tag.

Materials Manager—Red

Writer—Green

Reporter—Blue

Timekeeper—Yellow

Materials Managers can pick up their group's materials.

Give students 15 minutes to complete their list of rules.

**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:** Reporters from each group read their list of rules to the class. Randomly ask members of each group to explain why their rule is necessary.

**PROCESSING:** Ask the students to take 30 seconds and think to themselves if everyone in their group had participated equally.

Ask the students to share with the person across from them how they could help their group do a better job next time.

Randomly pick students to share with the rest of the class their partner's ideas for next time.

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## Personality of the Week

There are many ways to acknowledge students in the classroom. At Malmo School each class has a "Personality of the Week." The student chosen creates a bulletin board during the week that reflects his or her personality. It may contain articles from home, family, personal history, sports, hobbies, awards/recognitions and anything else that the student feels is important. During the week the remainder of the class creates a "Reflections Book" about the person. On Friday the class celebrates the Personality of the Week. The person discusses his or her bulletin board and answers any questions other students have. The book is read and given to the student from the class as a memento of their special week.





## Peer Support System

At the beginning of the year a questionnaire is administered to all students from Grades 3 to 6. This is to determine which students, in their peers' view, are the "caring and helping" people on the playground. Of the students identified, approximately 15 are then invited to become members of the Peer Support Group.

This group goes through an orientation day, followed by weekly meetings during the lunch hour. The group is taught such things as reflective listening, conflict resolution skills, and caring strategies. Outside during recess, before and after school, and lunch hour these students are "on duty"—not to supervise, but to seek out unhappy students, children who need someone to talk to, or to listen to them. They even help the younger ones organize games. The group is funded by AADAC and follows a manual for learning peer support skills.

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## Section 5: Rethinking Learning Centres

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Many classrooms were visited during the preparation of the Program Continuity Project. This section highlights many of the exciting ideas that were gathered from across the province.

Teachers spend hours creating centres and materials for their students. Have you ever considered having your students create them for you? Not only will they learn from this type of activity, it gives them ownership in the classroom and in their learning. Following are three examples.

### Student Created Projects

Following are examples of independent projects made by Grade 5/6 students. Their assignment was to take an area of interest and develop a centre on that topic that could be used by other students. Self and peer evaluation is tied into the project.

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Joanne Randall, teacher  
Malmo Elementary School  
Edmonton Public Schools

### Independent Project Centres<sup>3</sup>

Teachers,

As I mentioned at our divisional meeting, the independent projects my students just completed are now available for other students and classes to use. We will loan the centres on a weekly basis and, as well, the student who created the centre would be happy to introduce the centre to your class.

Please sign your name by the centre(s) you would like and indicate how many weeks you would like it for.

Peer assessment sheets have been designed for student use. My students would appreciate your students' feedback, however, this is totally optional.

Centres include:

Schizophrenia	Animal Abuse
Sign Language	Dogs
Bermuda Triangle*	U.F.O.'s
Horses	Aerobics
Lazers	Kidneys
Greenhouse Effect*	Egyptian Art
Knights and Castles*	Inventions
Australia	The Voice*
Clowns	Wolves

\*These centres also have a gameboard.

Let us know how things are going and do not hesitate to let us know if there are any glitches to iron out.

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<sup>3</sup>from Joanne Randall, *Profiling Student Growth: A Teacher Manual*, Edmonton Public School Board, 1991.

## Student Centre Evaluation<sup>4</sup>

Name of Centre:

Evaluated By:

1. What I liked about your centre ...
2. From working through your centre ...
3. Problems I had with the centre ...
4. Suggestions ...

## Independent Projects—Reflections

1. What steps did you go through to complete your project?
2. What strategies did you use?
3. What strategies did you learn?
4. What difficulties did you experience? How did you overcome them?
5. What went well for you? Why?
6. What feelings did you experience over the course of this project? Give specific examples and why you felt the way you did.
7. What do you know now that you didn't know before completing your project?
8. What would you do differently if you were to do the project over again?
9. What will the other students learn from your project? Will they enjoy your project? Why or why not? List your reasons.
10. Networking: Draw a flow chart indicating who you networked with and what service or information they provided you.

Soreiya B. Samji, student  
Malmo Elementary School  
Edmonton Public Schools

Self-assessment Question  
Soreiya B Samji : Kidneys

1. What particularly pleased me about my presentation was the way I explained about the brochures from the Kidney foundation

2. What I would do differently next time I present my project is practice what I was going to say and make some notes so I could explain it more clearly.

3. Positive Criticism	4. Constructive Criticism
① Good close-ups	① Improve on Volume
② Really good lighting	② Put people in different
③ Good sharp coloring	back pounds

<sup>4</sup>from *Profiling Student Growth* by Joanne Randall

Rob Wilson, teacher  
St. Anne School  
Fort McMurray Roman Catholic  
Separate S.D. #32

## Independent Project Centres

During a theme on careers the students were assigned to make a centre on their chosen career. Once completed, these centres were placed on a large bulletin board for other students to access. Following is an example of the activities the students created.

Student of Rob Wilson  
St. Anne School

Babysitting

- 1 Design a flyer that you would send around your neighborhood telling them that you can babysit for them.
- 2 What information would you put on it? List it.
- 3 What do you do if you find the child has fallen down the stairs and is really hurt?
- 4 What is the <sup>legal</sup> age for babysitting?
- 5 When you are babysitting do you call your friends and talk for an hour or 2?
- 6 What other jobs are like babysitting?
- 7 What do you do if the child turns up missing?
- 8 Should you let the child do what ever he or she wants to do?
- 9 How much up front should you have before you start to babysit? Kids from 2 months to 3 yrs old

## Project Proposal Forms

Students will need some guidelines when undertaking independent studies. The following form has proved effective for this purpose. Teacher and student become partners in establishing the project objectives, planning considerations and evaluation format. In this way a constructive plan is made that gives the student ownership and responsibility for the project.

### Project Proposal Form

1. I (We), \_\_\_\_\_, would like to work on the following PROJECT.  
The TOPIC is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. I (We) would like to do this particular PROJECT because ...  
(Reasons) a. \_\_\_\_\_  
b. \_\_\_\_\_  
c. \_\_\_\_\_
3. I (We) anticipate requiring the following:  
(Materials) a. \_\_\_\_\_  
(People) b. \_\_\_\_\_  
(Equipment) c. \_\_\_\_\_  
(Costs) d. \_\_\_\_\_
4. I (We) will have completed this PROJECT no later than \_\_\_\_\_.
5. I (We) will make the following presentation and/or will present the following FINISHED PRODUCT.  
(Presentation) When? Where? How? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Finished Product) What? Where? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. This PROJECT will help me (us) to (Objectives)  
a. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
b. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
c. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. The EVALUATION of my (our) PROJECT will be done in the following manner.  
(When?) \_\_\_\_\_  
(How?) \_\_\_\_\_  
(What?) \_\_\_\_\_
8. (We), the undersigned agree to follow the above outline.  
(Signatures) \_\_\_\_\_
9. I (We) have received permission for this PROJECT from (Teacher's signature) \_\_\_\_\_  
on \_\_\_\_\_.

## Math Projects

Loretta Stabler, teacher  
Millarville Community School  
Foothills S.D. #38

### Mini-Mall Math

(The mini-mall math project was initiated by Mrs. Loretta Stabler and her 1989/90 and 1990/91 Grade Five students from Millarville Community School.)



### Shared Experience

Manipulating play money sparked interest in math as students began daily computation of money, organizing it into thousands, hundreds, tens and ones (place value), using their totals to create problems using operations and properties, and estimating new totals. Each student's money balance grew as each day they earned additional "bonuses":

- Monetary values were assigned to each letter of the alphabet and totals for names quickly computed.
- Monetary values were assigned to each number and each student computed his telephone number total.
- Numbers were drawn from a hat and subtracted from student totals.
- Dice were rolled and translated into cash values for each student.



## Mini-Mall Beginnings

Students had lots of play cash to manipulate and needed ways to organize it. One morning a student brought a box, neatly transformed into a bank with money drawers. Next day, banks evolved all around the classroom; some single ownership, some partnerships. This led to a further problem. Who would be the customers if everyone had their own bank? The next day new boxes advertising new businesses were in place and classroom entrepreneurs were launched. The businesses did not buy and sell every day, but it soon became evident that many components of the math curriculum could be learned within the framework of what numbers really mean:

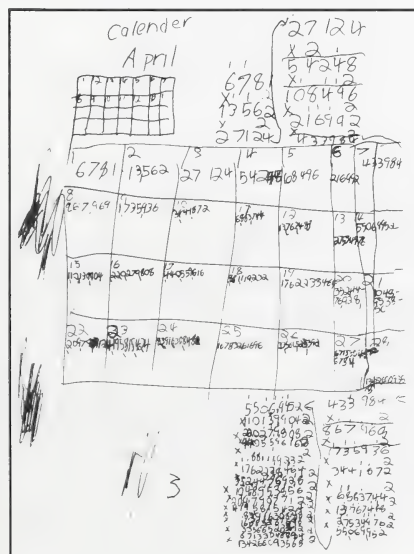
- Long division was taught within the context of using a total profit from the business and dividing it between the partners.
- Multiplication skills were practised using the unit prices from the stores and predicting sales if so many units were sold.

The structure of a mini-mall grew as needs for change were identified by the students—new businesses evolved from old ones, businesses were bought and sold as the interests of the students changed, and some mergers occurred. The concept was extended beyond the classroom by inviting the Grade Four class to visit the “mini-mall” once or twice each week.

## Business Booms

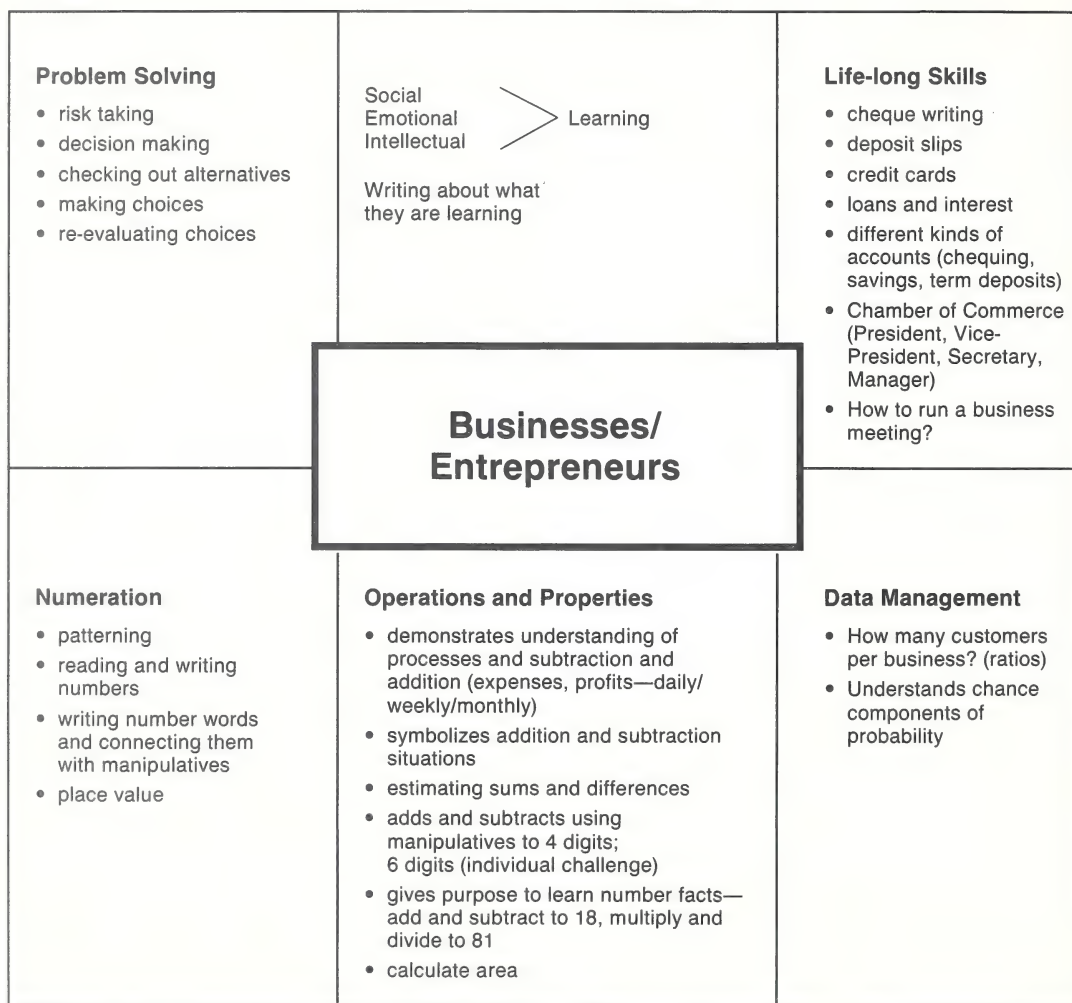
Students were using every spare moment in classtime, at noon hours, and after school organizing their businesses, counting money, redoing the exteriors of the businesses (most often cardboard boxes and backdrops with multi-compartments) and pursuing their interest in advertisements. They extended their interest in how to be businesslike to learning how credit works, how to figure out GST on sales, how to calculate percentage discounts and how to compute expenses. Together the businesses decided on the lease agreement and all businesses calculated their floor area. Some businesses looked critically at their space to cut down on expenses. Homework assignments were largely self-imposed, being driven by students’ needs to pursue their own learning.

Luke Ball, Grade 5 student  
Millarville Community School  
Foothills S.D.



## The Role of the Teacher

The teacher is a facilitator and coach in this integrated approach to mathematics. The components of the math program can be flow-charted with this project in mind:



Although the project begins with math concepts, as students read and write about other businesses, listen and share information with special visitors, learn about democratic decision-making and have business meetings to discuss issues and problem-solve, they realize that everyone is both a teacher and learner.

The teacher can stand ready to introduce a new skill, to pose a new problem and/or to invite in a new resources person to share with the students. In such a way the “mini-mall” math project continues to be meaningful across the school year.

## Extension Ideas

- Introduce ledgers and simple ledger procedures. A school secretary can often provide the needed information in this area.
- Invite a local bank manager to "walk" students through the cheque writing process and discuss deposits and withdrawals so that students become bank literate.
- Include a field trip to the local Treasury Branch in order to gain insights into banking practices.
- Ask, "How do businesses hire new employees?" The custodian, teaching assistant or "special needs" aide might share his or her knowledge about writing resumes. After students write resumes, have them share theirs at a Resume Party.
- Elect a "Chamber of Commerce" in order for problems to be given a democratic hearing.
- Investigate "truth in advertising" slogans and integrate language and the graphic arts.
- Around income tax time, discuss taxes and invite an accountant to simplify this information so that students make connections to the larger society.

Dustin Flundra  
Grade 5 student  
Millarville Community  
School  
Foothills S.D. #38



Dustin does self-evaluation on his involvement with the mini-mall.

## Math Walk

Have you ever considered your local shopping mall or main street a centre? Malmo undertook an exciting multi-age collaborative project at the local shopping mall, a "Math Walk."

Gloria Cathcart, teacher  
Malmo Elementary School  
Edmonton Public Schools

### "Math Walk": A Multi-age Collaborative Project

A group of 4 or 5 students was observed bent over the edge of a fountain in a local mall. They were independently estimating the number of coins in the fountain. Later they would compare their estimates.

Another group of 8- to 12-year-old children was huddled a short distance from the menu board of a food outlet, discussing and determining how much change they would get from \$30 after buying a pita pizza and an orange juice for everyone in the group.

Some students had gathered just outside the library door. They were studying the sign which gave the opening and closing times each day. They were responding to the question "What is the total number of hours each week that the library is open?"

This particular morning there were 27 groups of Grade 3 to 6 students scattered throughout a mid-sized shopping mall. They were not loitering. They were engaged in dozens of mathematical tasks and activities. This half-day "math walk" was one of several activities involving multi-age groups that the school engaged in during the year.



### Definition

A "Math Walk" is a combination field trip and scavenger hunt. But it is also more! Students are placed in a real-world setting and engage in a variety of tasks which involve mathematical concepts and processes. They must cooperatively discuss the task, agree on a process for completing it, work together to complete it, record the solution in some appropriate form, and then discuss the solution.



## Description of the Project

The idea for the math walk grew out of a casual conversation the authors had with a teacher from Australia.<sup>5</sup> (This is one of the benefits of attending professional conferences.)

The idea was implemented as a collaborative project between a school staff and the instructor and students in a senior level university mathematics curriculum and instruction course.

## The Assignment

The university students had been organized into groups of four for other course activities. Each group was given a sample math walk and the assignment of going to a specified mall to develop a set of activities suitable for groups of four to six students ranging in age from about eight through twelve years. An answer key was to be developed at the same time. The math walk was to take 2 to 2 1/2 hours to complete. The university students were encouraged to ensure that the tasks involved a range of difficulty, a wide range of mathematical topics, and a range of processes (estimation, computation, problem solving, observation, etc.). None of the tasks was to require children to go into any of the shops. The university students were given the equivalent of two class periods to complete the assignment.

## Refinement

The products generated by the seven groups were turned over to the elementary school. The second author (Grade 3 teacher) worked with another teacher to refine and develop two comparable math walks. They used two of the university products. The other five may be used for a similar activity in subsequent years. The editorial process involved some rewording, some change in sequencing, some exchange of tasks between the two products, and a sprinkling of new items to produce two walks of comparable difficulty and length.

Some of the tasks could be done by the youngest members of the group. The older students were encouraged to allow the younger ones to complete these tasks. On the other hand, some of the tasks were a challenge to the older students. In this case the older students were encouraged to assign subtasks, where possible, to the younger students, such as reading the cost of an item from a menu board, and then give the younger students the answer after completing the more complex part of the task themselves.

## Implementation and Other Logistics

Prior to putting the final touches to the math walk, the mall administration was contacted, the project explained, and permission obtained to proceed.

The reason for two discrete walks was to reduce congestion of children at one location in the mall. To further reduce congestion, each walk was separated into segments and the segments permuted to make for even more starting points. There were nine permutations of the two walks. In a few cases some minor modifications had to be made to the introductory comments to ensure the groups got started efficiently.

Anticipating that groups would finish at different times, a set of related *Sit-and-Think* exercises were compiled. These were given to each group member when the group arrived at their designated ending location.

The children were told not to bring any money on the walk. They were promised a treat when they returned to the school. This anticipation along with their interest in comparing answers with other groups and their interest in the *Sit-and-Think* exercises kept students together until all groups were ready to leave.

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<sup>5</sup>Mr. William Newman, Alice Springs, Australia

Parent volunteers were recruited to supplement the core of teachers as adult leaders. Enough parent volunteers were secured to ensure a minimum of two adults for every three groups of children. Each group had a student leader who was in Grade 6 or at least Grade 5.

The day before the walk a briefing session was held for the adult leaders. They were provided with a copy of the walk permutation that their group(s) would be following, the corresponding answer key, the route to be followed from the school to the mall, and a map of the mall. Meeting places and times were outlined. What to do if a group (or group member) got lost and other emergency procedures were also discussed. The adult leaders were advised not to do the work, but to encourage the children as they progressed. They could, of course, respond to questions if children asked.

There was a briefing session for all the children just prior to departure. En route to the mall (about a 15 minute walk), the adult leaders carried all the activity packages. These were distributed to each group member when they reached their designated starting position. Students had been encouraged earlier to bring a clip board, if they had one, to facilitate writing and drawing.

### **Sample Problems**

Which is a better buy, 5 muffins at \$1.05 each or a 6-pack of muffins at the TREATS muffin shop?

Proceed to BRAEMAR PETITES. Draw a mirror image of the shape above the doorway.

### **Problem Solving**

(The group was standing at the bottom of a set of stairs.) Suppose you walk up the stairs in the following manner: go up 1 step, return to the bottom; go up 2 steps, return to the bottom, and so on. How many steps would you climb before you reach the top?

### **Communication**

Stand at the bottom of the stairs and look up the stairs. Using the middle of the stairs as your line of symmetry, draw as many symmetrical shapes as you can see. (Examples: rectangles, triangles, and many others.)

### **Reasoning**

Go to the FOOT LOCKER store. Draw the geometric shape that appears around the FOOT LOCKER sign.

Drawing only 3 lines, make 4 triangles using the above shape.

OAKIES sells specialty coffees in 3 sizes; small (225 ml), medium (300 ml), and large (350 ml). If one coffee pot holds 2800 ml, how many

- small cups of coffee will it serve?
- medium cups will it serve?
- large cups will it serve?

### **Estimation**

Guess which are taller; the light poles in the parking lot, or the poles which support the cables for the electric transit buses.

Along the west outer wall of PEARLE VISION Centre is a display window featuring a cylinder of glasses. Estimate the number of glasses on one cylinder. Now estimate how many pairs of glasses are in the entire window display.

Using the Directory, compare the floor size of VOGUE SHOES and BIRKS. Write a fraction to illustrate the comparison. (Note: The Directory was a scale drawing of the floor plan of the mall but the scale was not indicated.)



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Terry Brannigan, teacher  
Simone Lahey, teacher  
Edwards Elementary School  
Rockyview S.D. #41

## Consider a Loft

To add more floor space and create an exciting, unique space for children, consider adding a loft to your classroom. Lofts can be used for a variety of activities and centres including:

- library
- dramatic play
- publishing/writing lab

Don't forget, building a loft creates a unique space for activities and centres underneath, including:

- sand/water/manipulatives area
- publishing areas
- art/science areas

Many teachers have had lofts constructed in their classrooms with help from parent volunteers and donations from local businesses.



At Edwards Elementary in Airdrie the reading loft is affectionately known as the reading castle. It was constructed by a group of parents when their children were in ECS. After being in the ECS room for several years the reading castle is now housed in Mrs. Brannigan's and Miss Lahey's Grade One/Two area.

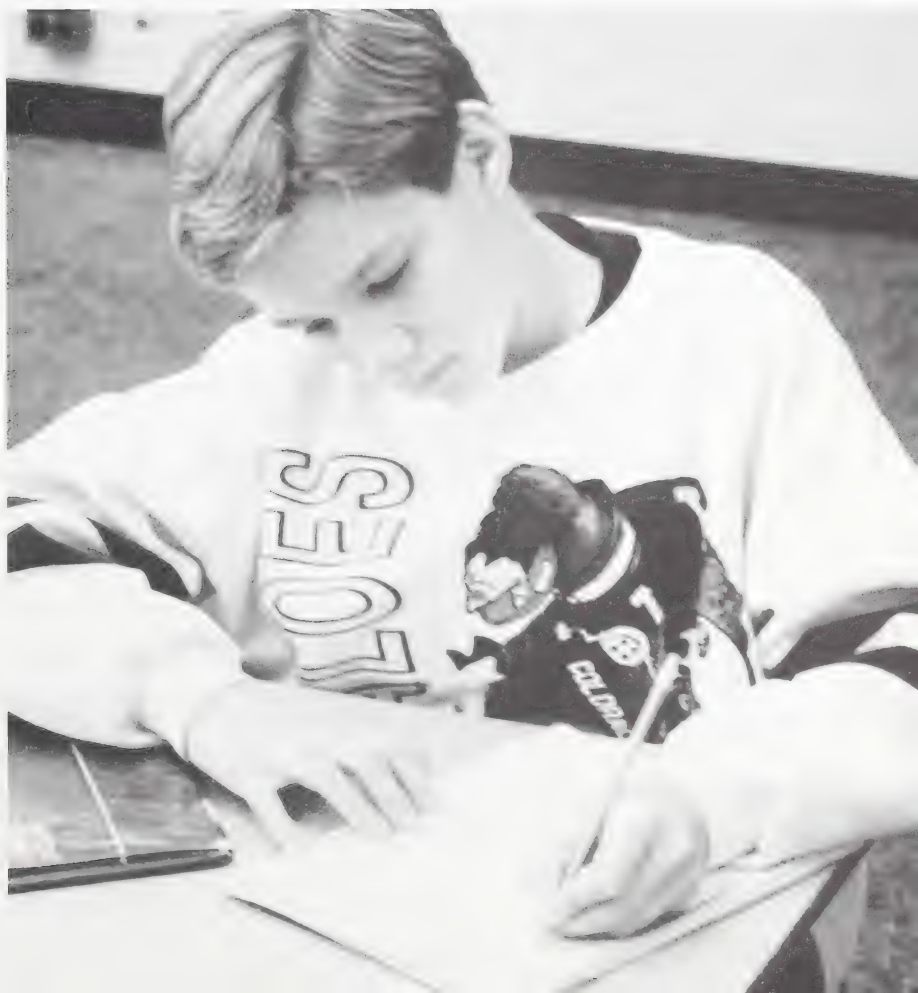
## Summary

The physical and social/emotional environment of the classroom must be considered when planning for students. Planning for the whole child means planning all aspects of the environment. The classroom must invite children into the learning process and foster independence, responsibility and positive self-esteem. The design of the classroom must ensure continuity in learning experiences from subject to subject, grade to grade and year to year and be consistent with the principles of child development. This Link provided activities for planning and designing developmentally appropriate classroom environments. Strategies for developing a positive social and emotional environment in the classroom are shared.



## Link 3

### Building a Literate Environment—Focus on Writing





## Building a Literate Environment

The Program Continuity Policy emphasizes connections—in particular, having students see and make connections in their learning. The policy statement is about continuity and child development. Because language has impact on all areas of development, it is clearly central to the policy statement.

Language is the primary instrument by which children receive, develop and express their understanding of the environment. Language is the vehicle that children use to make connections and to learn. Although children understand and make connections in their learning on their own, it is equally important that teachers facilitate “connection making” in their instruction and in the activities they share with their students. Educators must take every opportunity to use language to strengthen connections for students.

Link 3 provides strategies for writing across the curriculum. While the Policy acknowledges the interrelatedness of language learning, it is beyond the scope of this resource to cover all aspects of it in detail. Extensive strategies for reading are contained in Alberta Education's *Reading Diagnostic Program* and in *Program Continuity: The Positive Link—Transitions from E.C.S. to Grade One*, the resource manual that accompanies the first program in this video series.

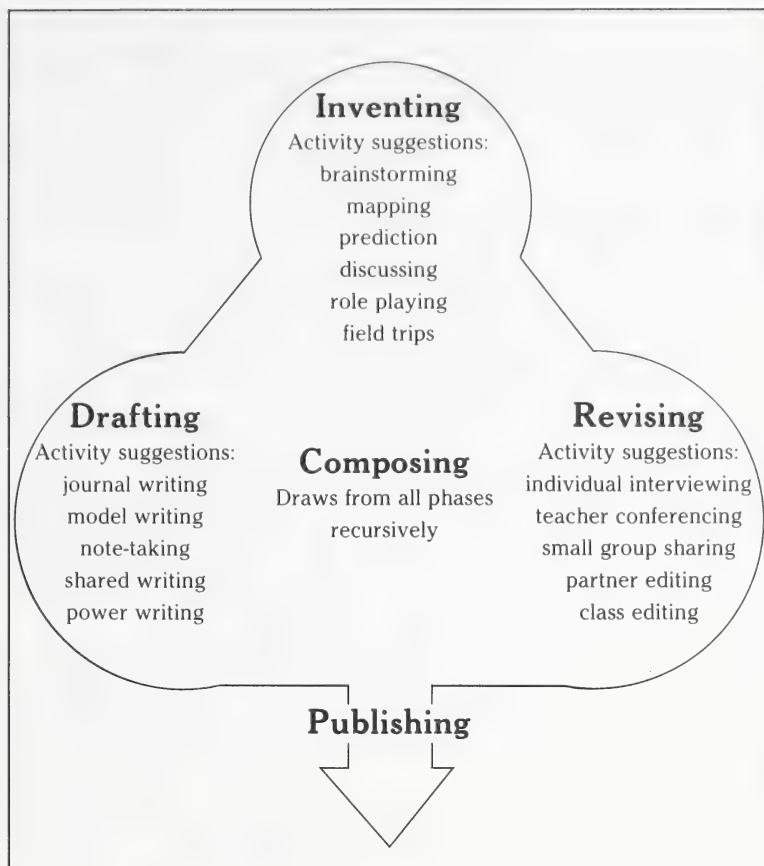
### Writing as a Tool to Learn

Writing should play a significant role throughout a day in a student's life. Using writing to plan, record, inquire, respond, create, organize and reflect should be natural parts of daily activity. Writing across the curriculum requires that students utilize all of these kinds of writing in all subject areas.

Writing must be more than filling in the blanks and copying notes off the board. Writing activities in any subject must be linked to meaningful, purposeful activities. Students need to make the link that writing is a tool for learning.

Students need to be allowed to write like real writers. The writing process is a recursive act. That is, writers move back and forth among phases. They write and revise what it is they want to say. Rather than using the traditional linear models (pre-writing—writing—post-writing) students should come to view writing as a process of composing, as a “web” of phases, connected at many intersecting points. The diagram on the next page illustrates the recursive nature of writing<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>Victor Steel, *A Guide for Writing Process in the Primary and Elementary Grades* (Fort McMurray Catholic School Board, 1991).



Experienced writers move naturally back and forth among planning, writing, and revision as their piece of writing takes shape. Students are capable of this too, given instruction, modelling and writing time. The craft of writing can only be learned through the act of writing itself. Students must be given opportunity and time to write, if they are to become writers.

Writing can take many forms, and serve many different purposes. When planning writing activities teachers can consider three broad types: expressive, transactional and poetic writing.

**Expressive writing** is usually the first kind of writing children do. It is basically concerned with "I." The language is usually spontaneous, natural and colloquial. It can be exploratory. It may simply be a recording of experiences and take the form of a narrative. In this type of writing the thoughts and feelings of the author are paramount. This type of writing often remains unedited. Examples of expressive writing are:

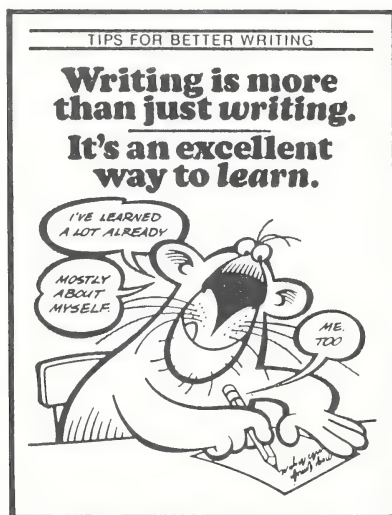
- journals—personal thoughts are recorded on a daily/weekly basis; choice of format is individual, usually unedited
- learning logs—details and reflections on learning experiences are recorded on a daily or weekly basis; choice of format is individual or can be directed by teacher, usually unedited; purpose is to internalize previous learning experiences.



**Transactional writing** involves the use of precise information to instruct, record, persuade or report. Truth and accuracy are paramount. It is often used in the content areas for such writing as reports, debates or proofs. Examples of transactional writing are: note-making, lists, charts, instructions, graphs, reports, speeches.

**Poetic writing** is writing in its most polished form. Drafts are revised and edited so the writing can stand as a work of art. Audience reaction is paramount. Examples of poetic writing are: stories, novels, poetry.

These three major types of writing connect across all curricula. Teachers should try to achieve a balance of student-initiated and teacher-directed writing activities. Above all else, students need to learn that writing is a tool that can help them explore, construct, and communicate meaning.



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## Strategies for Writing

The following writing strategies are provided to enable all teachers, in all subject areas, to assist students with their writing.

For many writers the most difficult part of the writing process is getting started. It is at this stage that topics are selected, content is brainstormed, and the writer's ideas take their initial shape. It can be a time-consuming phase as the writer develops a plan and direction for a piece of writing.

## Choosing Topics

Students may have difficulty selecting topics. If they have had topics chosen for them throughout their schooling students can find it difficult to "all of a sudden, do it on their own." The following strategies will help both teachers and students in this area.

\* The posters in the Tips for Better Writers series have been reproduced courtesy of Pine Tree Media (Milton, Ont.) and Robert Jacobson Design Ltd.



## Donald Graves's Three Column Memory Exercise<sup>1</sup>

Often children say "I don't know what to write about, I'm not interested in anything, I'm not an expert on anything." The Three Column Memory Exercise is an excellent tool for teachers to use to help these students. Begin by writing a list of your students' names from memory in a column on the left side of the page.

Some teachers find that they have trouble remembering all of their students' names. What are the students like who were left off? Are any of them the ones who have difficulty finding topics? These children might be the ones that you will have to watch and listen to closely.

Second, write in the centre column, opposite each name, something the child knows, something unique to that child, something he or she collects or is interested in or has mentioned.

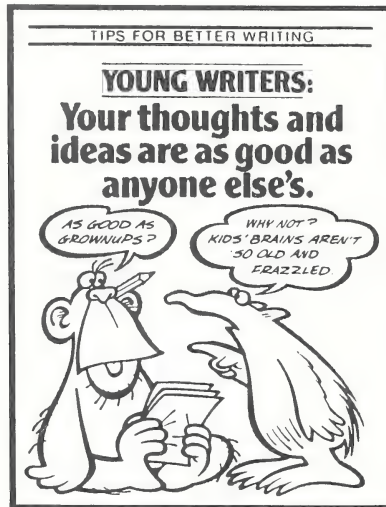
	Experiences and Interests	Confirmation Column
1. Fred Gallo	Sharks	
2. Marcella Cowan	Horses	X
3. John Pringle		
4. Allison Goodrich		
5. Norman Frazier	Sister in hospital	X
6. Delores Sunderland	Sea life, birds	
7. Frances Sawtelle		
8. Jonathan Freedman	Prehistoric animals	
9. Charles Lentini	Motorcycles	
10. Aleka Alphanosopoulos	Singing	
11. Jason Beckwith		

Third, check to see if what you have written down for each child has been specifically confirmed. Indicate in the third column if you have ever heard that child talk about the interest or share it in any way with anyone. Do this by watching and listening to your students. Often topics can be confirmed during informal situations such as lunch time, recess or breaks when students talk in a relaxed manner with their peers about what really interests and excites them.

By being a "kid watcher" a teacher can help students identify topics that will be of interest to them. This list should be constantly added to as you confirm more topics for your students. When a student declares they don't know what to write about, you have a list of topics available to share with the student and transfer to his or her writing portfolio.

<sup>1</sup>Reprinted with permission from Donald Graves: *Writing: Teachers and Children at Work* (Heinemann Educational Books, Inc., Portsmouth, NH, 1983).

This exercise is effective because the topics identified belong to the students. As Graves points out, it works on the child's voice. When children have control of the topic, they perceive themselves as knowers and have established ownership for their learning. It becomes meaningful.

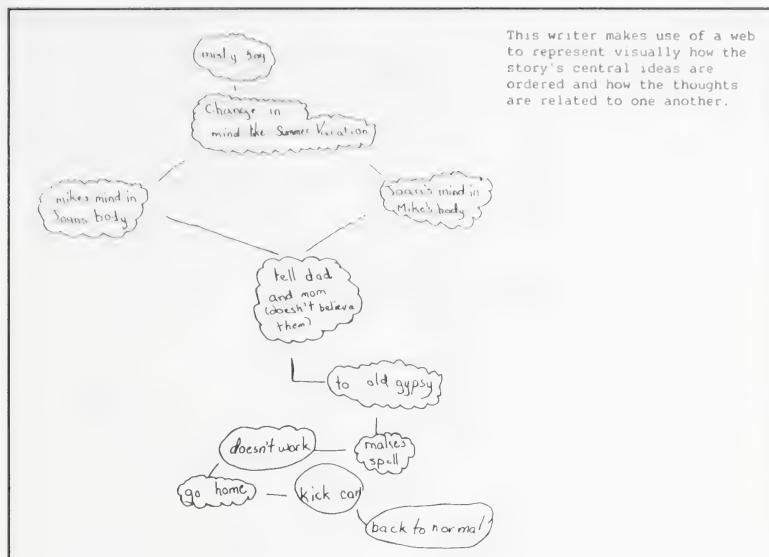


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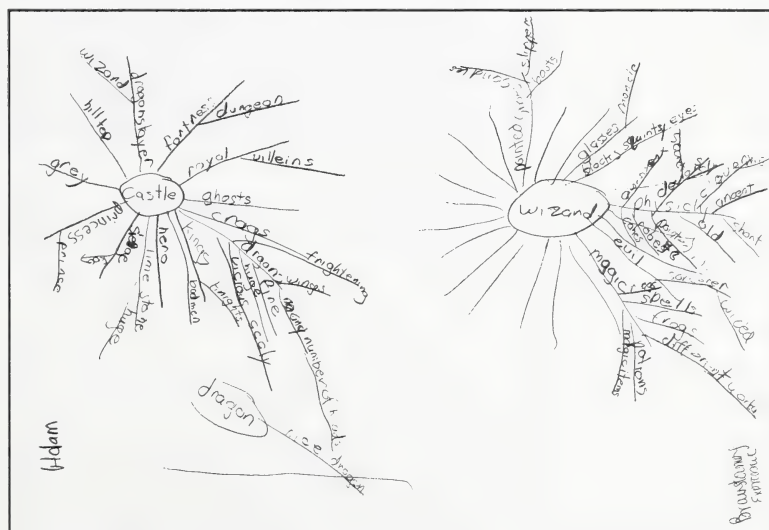
## Brainstorming/Webbing

Another important technique for topic selection is brainstorming.

Brainstorming can help a writer bring out what is already known. It can also be used to generate original ideas. Brainstorming can be done individually, in small groups, or with the whole class. What is important in this technique is *talking* and *sharing ideas*. It is through this process that topics are identified, content established and ideas are connected. Brainstorming is effective for any topic and should be used as a writing strategy across the curriculum. Through discussion and sharing, brainstorming allows a writer to clarify, sort, add and discard ideas before starting the writing process. It is typical to find an initial flurry of responses during a brainstorm, followed by a lull. Have students work through this. Often a second flurry of ideas comes—often more creative than the original listing of ideas.



## Brainstorm—Expressive Writing



## Brainstorm—Social Studies Writing

Name: Joelle Repka  
 Fill in the boxes as you complete parts of your independent study.

**INDEPENDENT STUDY FLOW CHART**

**SOURCES OF INFORMATION I'VE USED**  
 p. 4 & computer's encyclopedia  
 p. 3 & 11. New Book of Knowledge  
 p. 3 World Book

**TOPIC I'VE CHOSEN**  
Celts

**THINGS I'VE DONE TO ORGANIZE MY INFORMATION**  
 I used four one page introductions  
 A. Religious Needs  
 B. Physiological Needs  
 C. Social Needs  
 D. Learning with paragraphs  
 7. Bibliography  
 4. Title page

**QUESTIONS I'M GOING TO ANSWER**  
 1. What were the Celts like?  
 2. What did they eat?  
 3. What did they wear?  
 4. What did they believe in?  
 5. What did they do for fun?  
 6. What did they do for work?  
 7. What did they do for war?  
 8. What did they do for peace?  
 9. What did they do for love?  
 10. What did they do for death?

**PRODUCTS I'VE MADE TO SHARE MY INFORMATION**

Basic Needs

1. Social  
 2. Physiological  
 3. Religious

4. Learning  
 5. Bibliography  
 6. Title page

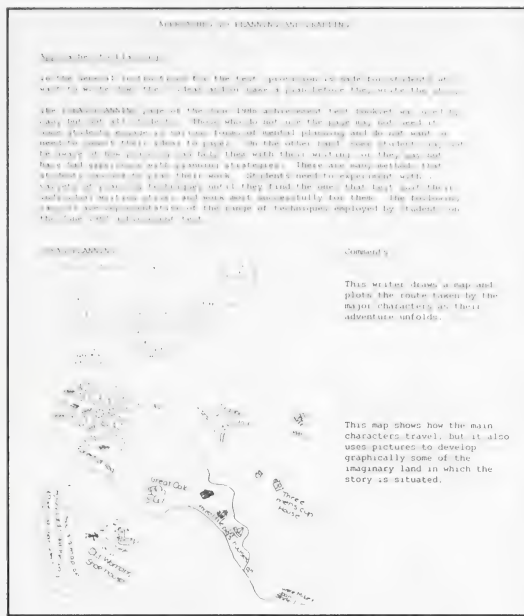
psychological

## Listing and Jotting

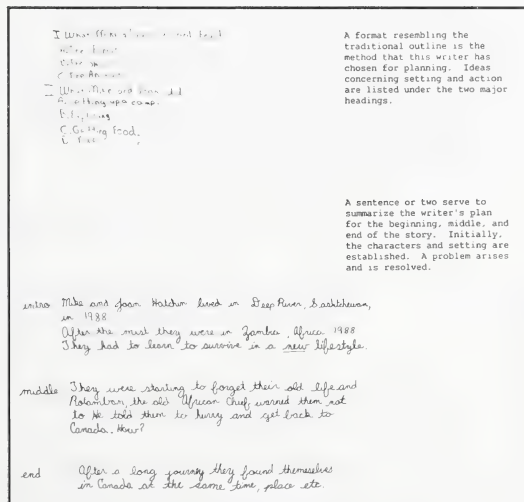
Both listing and jotting are forms of brainstorming. However they may also involve going to sources outside of a brainstorming session. This technique is especially effective in Science and Social Studies when factual material will have to be included in the writing. Notes can be taken from research done in the library, from previewing video and audio materials, or from guest speakers or discussions. Teachers need to instruct students on how to take notes from different kinds of sources.

Listing and jotting for expressive writing may take the form of story mapping and outlining. All these techniques help writers plan and initiate their writing.

## Story Mapping



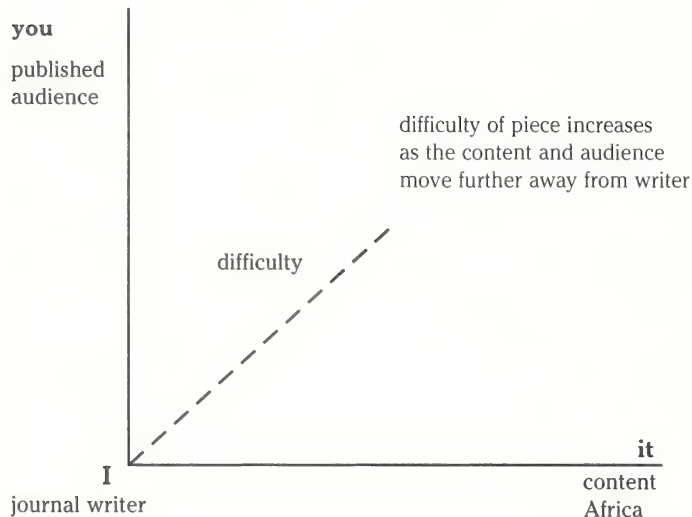
## Outlining



## Narrowing the Topic

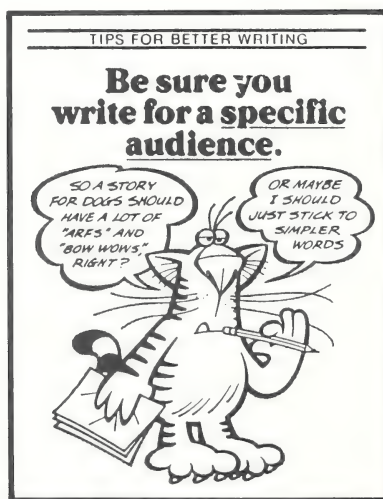
Many students have difficulty narrowing their chosen topic to an appropriate scope. For this reason, starting the writing process can become an overwhelming task for them. James Moffett<sup>2</sup> has identified two considerations for determining the difficulty of a writing piece: content and audience.

<sup>2</sup>James Moffett. *Coming on Centre*. (Toronto: Houghton Mifflin, 1981)



Consider the child at the centre of a piece of writing. If the writing is close and personal, for a limited audience, then the writing should be comparatively easy, e.g., brainstorm list, journal of weekly activities. As the content moves further away from the writer, and the piece is for a wider audience, the writing will become more difficult. For instance, if the writer chooses to write about Africa, and is seeking to publish the piece for a class library, the piece becomes much more difficult to write.

Students may worry about the audience, becoming so concerned with the final product that they have trouble starting. In this case, the role of the teacher is to help the student focus on drafting first, then polishing for publication once the content is written.



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The other difficulty students may have is with content. Selecting the broad topic of Africa and trying to write about it can be overwhelming. As a result, the student may have trouble getting started. Teacher or peer conferencing can help the student narrow the focus of the topic. Through talking, researching, and thinking, the student may narrow the choice to a more manageable topic, e.g., Wild Cats of Africa. The process of getting started is now not so overwhelming.

Another suggestion is to have students define their topic as a question they want to answer. Identifying the question that they want to answer in the writing clarifies for both student and teacher what they don't know about a topic. Brainstorming can help identify what is important or significant about the question, why they care about the subject. Ask the student how they are going to answer it. This question defines the method, and identifies how manageable the task will be.

These questions can help the student, teacher, or other "editor" narrow the topic at the initial stages of the writing process. The following questions may also prove useful:

- What are you going to write about? How can you narrow your topic?
- How are you going to put that down on paper?
- What problems might you run into? (e.g., resources, length, audience)
- Do you have an audience in mind?
- Do you have any resources that you can use?

## **Talking**

Often overlooked, talking is an essential part of the writing process. Writers need to talk about their ideas. When done at the beginning of the writing process talking is an invaluable tool for helping the writer begin to write. When focused on content, peer conferences help writers clarify, add or discard ideas. Conferences can also help clarify both the audience and the form of the writing, i.e., expressive or transactional. Students will need instruction and practice in conferencing with their peers.

## **Interviews**

Children can begin the writing process by conducting interviews to gather information on a topic of interest. Once the material is gathered, the drafting stage can begin.

It is important to teach children the steps necessary for conducting an effective interview.

### **Steps for Conducting Effective Interviews**

1. Once an area of interest has been identified, encourage preliminary reading on the topic. This step is important as it helps the writer clarify the topic.
2. From the pre-reading, the interviewer needs to formulate a series of questions that will be asked. Students need practice writing questions that will generate information. Open-ended questions such as: "Tell me..." or "Explain..." instead of "Do you like..." will help students conduct more effective interviews.

3. Before the interview takes place, additional information can be gathered that will help with writing the final report.
4. The interview is conducted. As children may have difficulty writing down information during the interview, suggest tape-recording it.
5. Once the interview is completed, the information from the responses and preliminary research can be organized and the writing begin.

Children enjoy conducting interviews. Equipping students with strategies to do so will help them use this valuable writing tool.

## **Surveys**

Conducting polls or surveys is another strategy for generating writing topics. Students of all ages enjoy this activity. Surveying requires both writing and speaking skills and is an excellent activity to generate writing across the curriculum, particularly in Social Studies, Math and Science.

### **Conducting Surveys**

1. Through discussion, reading and brainstorming, students determine a survey question.
2. Before they conduct the survey, have students make a prediction about the results.
3. Students record the prediction and list reasons/support for the prediction.
4. Students need to be taught how to ask the survey question and record responses/information. The information should be organized in such a way that it can be interpreted easily and effectively. Integrate strategies for tallying responses and reading graphs into the math curriculum.
5. Once the survey is completed students need to organize and report their data using a clear and concise format. Results should be compared to the original prediction. Students should try to interpret their results.
6. The great thing about surveys is that they often lead to more questions. Further issues and questions can be brainstormed for future research. These can be added to a list in the writing portfolio for future writing topics.

## Story Grammar Grids

The purpose of story grammar grids is to help students comprehend story sequence and to recognize story elements. Various kinds of story grids can be used depending on the level of the students. Even the youngest students are usually familiar with cumulative tales and cause-and-effect stories. To help students identify the various elements of a story, prepare an appropriate chart on the chalkboard, chart or overhead, then read a story aloud. After reading, discuss and fill in the various elements of the story together. After many teacher-led discussions, students will be ready to use these story grids for their own writing.

Students can use blank grids to plan their own stories. Blank grids can be kept in the writing area or in student portfolios.

### Problem Centered Story Grammar Grid<sup>3</sup>

	Episode #1	Episode #2	Episode #3
<b>Setting</b>			
Who			
When			
Where			
What			
<b>Initiating Event or Problem</b>			
<b>Internal Reaction</b>			
Emotion			
Plan			
<b>Outcome</b>			
<b>Ending</b>			

<sup>3</sup>Orin Cochrane, Donna Cochrane, Sharen Scalena and Ethel Buchanan, *Reading, Writing and Caring*, Winnipeg Whole Language Consultants, 1984, pages 65 and 188.

## Sample Story Grammar Grid<sup>4</sup>

	EPISODE 1	EPISODE 2	EPISODE 3	EPISODE 4	EPISODE 5
SETTING	Dentist, patient	Dentist, patient, receptionist	Dentist, patient receptionist, caretaker	Dentist, patient receptionist, caretaker dental hygienist	Dentist, patient receptionist, caretaker dental hygienist, meter maid
WHO					
WHEN	6:00 p.m. Thursday	6:00 p.m. Thursday	6:00 p.m. Thursday	6:00 p.m. Thursday	6:00 p.m. Thursday
WHERE	Dentist's office	Dentist's office	Dentist's office	Dentist's office	Dentist's office
WHAT	Dentist is trying to pull a tooth	Dentist is trying to pull a tooth	Dentist is trying to pull a tooth	Dentist is trying to pull a tooth	Dentist is trying to pull a tooth
INITIATING EVENT or PROBLEM	tooth will not come out	tooth will not come out	tooth will not come out	tooth will not come out	tooth will not come out
INTERNAL REACTION EMOTION	frustrated	frustrated	frustrated	frustrated	frustrated
PLAN	to get help. Dentist calls the receptionist.	to get help. Receptionist calls the caretaker.	to get help. Caretaker calls the dental hygienist.	to get help. Hygienist calls the meter maid.	to get help. Meter maid calls the waiting patient.
EXTERNAL REACTION or ATTEMPT	Dentist pulls on the tooth. Receptionist pulls on the dentist.	Dentist pulls on the tooth. Receptionist pulls on the dentist. Caretaker pulls on the receptionist.	Dentist pulls on the tooth. Receptionist pulls on the dentist. Caretaker pulls on the receptionist. Dental hygienist pulls on the caretaker.	Dentist pulls on the tooth. Receptionist pulls on the dentist. Caretaker pulls on the receptionist. Dental hygienist pulls on the caretaker. Meter maid pulls on the hygienist.	Dentist pulls on the tooth. Receptionist pulls on the dentist. Caretaker pulls on the receptionist. Dental hygienist pulls on the caretaker. Meter maid pulls on the hygienist. Waiting patient pulls on the meter maid. yanked and twisted
OUTCOME	tooth will not come out.	tooth will not come out.	tooth will not come out.	tooth will not come out.	tooth came out.
ENDING					all were happy.

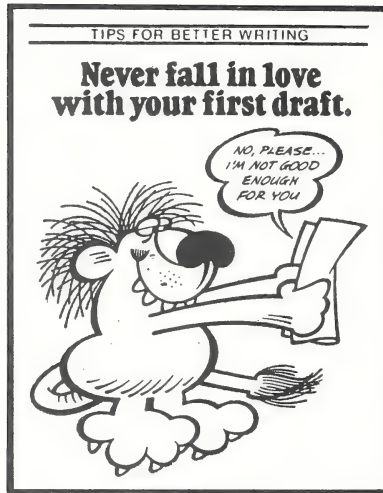
<sup>4</sup>from *Reading, Writing and Caring*, p. 188

Story Grammar #2			
Setting			
Beginning			
Reaction			
Attempt			
Outcome			
Ending			

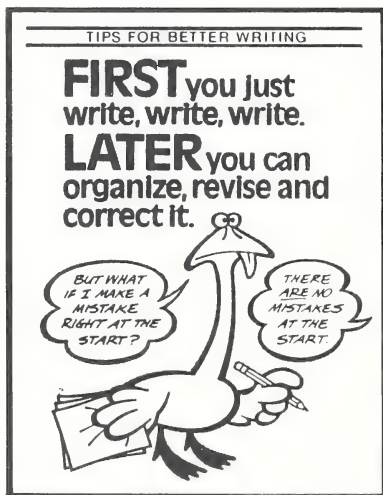
<b>Story Grammar #3</b>			
<b>Beginning</b>			
Title			
When			
Where			
Who			
<b>Middle</b>			
Problem			
Plan			
<b>Ending</b>			
Solution			
End			







Focusing on content rather than perfect spelling or punctuation can accelerate the writer's flow of thought to print.



In subsequent drafts the writer's attention can shift to revising for sequence, clarifying through vocabulary, sentence and paragraph structure or reordering. Final editing involves the correction of spelling, punctuation, syntax, and vocabulary. Many teachers use the C.O.P.S. strategy. COPS stands for: Capitalization Overall Appearance Punctuation Spelling.

The writing process requires time. Children will need large blocks of time each day to successfully complete a piece of writing. They also need opportunities to share their writing through various methods of conferencing during this phase. It is through conferencing that the writer shapes the piece for publishing. Not all pieces will get to the final publishing stage. The importance of conferencing is that it allows the writer to decide what pieces should be worked to a final stage.

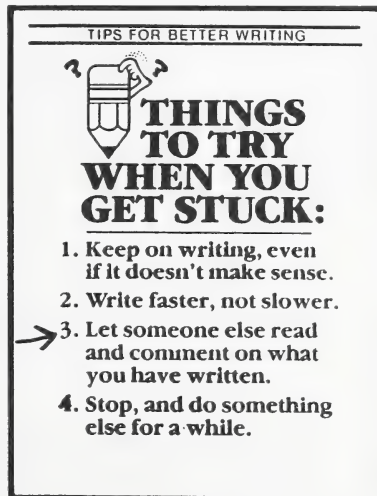
The following strategies can help students continue to write once a topic has been selected. The strategies can be used in any curriculum area.

## Lead Strategy

This strategy helps the writing process get started. Using this strategy a writer writes three to five opening leads to a piece. Often a student will be able to write an opening sentence, but may have trouble continuing. Typically within five to ten minutes the student is still sitting there with nothing else written. There can be several reasons for this, but often it is because the writer feels some sense of dissatisfaction with the opening.

Donald Graves suggests that a writer compose several leads to a piece and then share them in a quick conference.<sup>6</sup> The writer can get feedback on the most effective opening and then progress from there. The lead strategy can also be used for individual paragraphs throughout the body of a piece. Once a lead has been created the writing can progress.

What is needed now is time for students to write. Find time for writing by taking it. By integrating language into all curriculum areas there will be gains for students. As children engage in meaningful writing activities, writing development will occur. See Link 4, "Theme Planning."

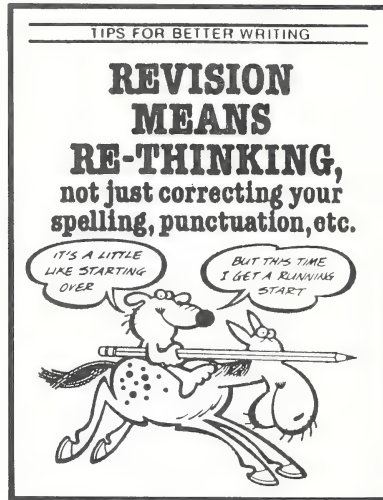


<sup>6</sup>Donald Graves. *Writing: Teacher and Children at Work*. (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1983)

## Revision and Editing

Once large amounts of time have been given over to writing, revision and editing enter into the picture. Teachers and students need to understand that revision and editing are a normal part of the writing process. Students need to accept that the first draft will not necessarily be the last. It is through the process of revision that the craft of writing develops.

Revision and editing are two separate processes. Revision concerns changes to ideas and the content of a piece; editing includes checking and correcting technical elements such as punctuation, sentence structure and spelling.



Students need to see how revision is done. Teachers can model this process by writing pieces with the entire class. The class participates in creating a first draft together either on chart paper or overhead. When it is completed, begin modelling how revision takes place. First, read the text aloud and ask students clarifying questions about it. Students can ask conferencing questions that will help the group revise the piece.

Throughout this process it is important that the teacher use sensible revision strategies. For instance, the use of arrows, and notes in the margin, are strategies writers use to revise their work. Included below is a list of some proofreader's marks that are used by "real editors." Although some are rather technical, others are useful for writers of all ages. They work especially well if students are using a word processor.

# Proofreader's Marks

## Style of Type

- lc* Set in LOWER CASE or ~~xywxyz~~
- caps* SET IN in capitals
- rom* Set in roman (or regular) type
- ital* Set in italic (or *oblique*) type
- lf* Set in lightface type
- b.f.* Set in boldface type
- ∨* Set superior character?
- ∧* Set in inferior character.

## Positioning

- ]* Move to right
- [* Move to left
- ||* Align vertically
- tr.* Transpose letters in a word
- tr.* Transpose enclosed in ring matter

## Delete or insert

- e* Delete, take out
- stet* Let it stand—(all matter above dots)
- O.S.C.* Out see copy (if possible, make photocopy and staple to page with OSC marked)

## Paragraphing

- #* Begin a paragraph
- no #* No paragraph
- run on* Run on
- flush #* [No paragraph indentation

## Spacing

- #* Insert space (or more space)
- Close up entirely; take out space
- ∪* Less space between words
- eq #* Equalize space between words

## Punctuation

- Insert a period
- ⑤* Insert a semicolon
- ∧* Insert a comma
- ⋮* Insert a colon
- ∨* Apostrophe or single quote
- ∨ ∨* Quotation marks or quotes
- ?/* Question mark or "query"
- !/* Exclamation mark
- =/* Insert hyphen
- |m|* Insert EM dash
- |n|* Insert EN dash
- (/)* Parentheses
- [ / ]* Brackets

## Miscellaneous

- (Sp)* Spell out (21 gr)
- OK w/c* OK "with corrections"
- OK a/c* or "as corrected"
- └* Break line for word

## Example of a Proofread Page

The ~~two~~ children ran down ~~ten~~ steep, grassy slope. Marjorie looked back stet./tr.  
over her shoulder to see if they were in the clear and her foot caught in a  
hummock ~~of~~ grass. #

She fell headlong, and the breath was driven out of her lungs with the force  
of her fall. Adam turned when he heard her fall and almost fell himself. # delete  
"Come on," he shouted. "Get up." He reached for her hand to pull her up. /!/  
"no! I can't. I've hurt myself." Marjorie, who was only ~~Ten~~ and small for her # cap ✓ l.c.  
age, pulled away from Adam's hand. "Let them catch us! I don't care." tr | m |

The four ~~wheel~~ drive vehicle that roared over the brow of the hill had a =/=/  
printed name in red letters on the bug deflector. The vehicle bore down on  
them until they could read the name, "meat grinder"! caps

Students need to see revision as a re-thinking and reshaping process. It should not be a painful rewrite of the entire piece. Modelling activities are important so students see that the writing process is essentially a craft of drafting and revision.

Modelling can be time-consuming, but it is time well spent, provided that students are given the opportunity to practice the demonstrated strategies using their writing.

Following is a sample piece of student writing that has gone through the revision/editing process. Notice the writer's use of crossing out, arrows, and notes to himself—indications that he is dealing with the content. Through subsequent drafts the piece is reworked to its final polished form.



# Adam's House on Maple Street

## Draft 1

The House on Maple Street

The rockets boomed and the house left the ground. The trees swayed and were uprooted as they flew to the side. The smoke cleared and all that was left of the house was the foundation. All the neighbors were awake. The Shenanchuk's house was at least in orbit by now.

Danny's parents woke up in shock floating at the ceiling. His mom started screaming and his dad fainted. They both had origin masks on, so did Danny.

Danny was a curious boy in grade ten and he was very interested in science. He got a chemistry set when he was 10 but to propel the house he had to steal some plutonium from his dad's work. He was studying rocket fuel in school so he went in the attic and made some. He had to have a plastic suit and tape plastic sheets over the doors and windows so the radiation didn't harm anything. After Danny got some hazardous waste containers to clean the air. Trying to send a house into orbit. Now his curiosity has got him into some big trouble.

They only had enough fuel and oxygen to go to mars and back. As soon as they reached Mars Danny decided to land on Mars. It was rocky with no water. Perfect place for a.....

All of a sudden a big shiny round of protoplanet approached over the horizon, it looked like a "SLUG". It was leaving a stream of ooze behind it.

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## Draft 2

The House On Maple St.

The rockets boomed as the house left the ground. The trees swayed and were uprooted as they flew to the side. The smoke cleared and all that was left of the house was the foundation. All the neighbors were awake. The Shenanchuk's house was at least in orbit by now.

Danny's parents woke up in shock floating at the ceiling. His mom started screaming and his dad fainted. They both had origin masks on, so did Danny.

Danny was a curious boy in grade ten and he was very interested in science. He got a chemistry set when he was 10 but to propel the house he had to steal some plutonium from his dad's work. He was studying rocket fuel in school so he went in the attic and made some. He had to have a plastic suit and tape plastic sheets over the doors and windows so the radiation didn't harm anything. After Danny got some hazardous waste containers to clean the air. Trying to send a house into orbit. Now his curiosity has got him into some big trouble.

They only had enough fuel and oxygen to go to mars and back. As soon as they reached Mars Danny decided to land on Mars. It was rocky with no water. Perfect place for a.....

All of a sudden a big shiny round of protoplanet approached over the horizon, it looked like a "SLUG". It was leaving a river of ooze behind it.

## Draft 3

The House on Maple Street

By Adam Roberts

The rockets boomed as the house left the ground. The trees swayed and were uprooted as they flew to the side. The smoke cleared and all that was left of the house was the foundation. All the neighbors were awake. The Shenanchuk's house was at least in orbit by now.

Danny's parents woke up in shock floating at the ceiling. His mom started screaming and his dad fainted. They both had origin masks on, so did Danny.

Danny was a curious boy in grade ten and he was very interested in science. He had received a chemistry set when he was 10 and had been a chemist ever since, but to propel the house he had to steal some plutonium from his dad's work. He was studying rocket fuel in school so he went in the attic and made some. He had to have a plastic suit and tape plastic sheets over the doors and windows so the radiation didn't harm anything. After Danny got some hazardous waste containers to clean the air. He was trying to send a house into orbit. Now his curiosity has got him into some big trouble.

They only had enough fuel and oxygen to go to mars and back. As soon as they reached Mars Danny decided to land there. It was rocky with no water. Perfect place for a.....

## Draft 4

The House On Maple St.  
The rocket boomed as the house left the ground. The trees swayed and were uprooted as they flew to the side. The smoke cleared and all that was left of the house was the foundation. All the neighbors were awake. The Shenanchuk's house was at least in orbit by now.

Danny's parents woke up in shock floating at the ceiling. His mom started screaming and his dad fainted. They both had oxygen masks on, so did Danny.

Danny was a curious boy in grade ten and he was very interested in science. He got a chemistry set when he was 10 but to propel the house he had to steal some plutonium from his dad's work. He was studying rocket fuel in school so he went in the attic and made some. He had to have a plastic suit and tape plastic sheets over the doors and windows so the radiation didn't harm anything. After Danny got some hazardous waste containers to clean the air. Trying to send a house into orbit. Now his curiosity has got him into some big trouble.

They only had enough fuel and oxygen to go to Mars and back. As soon as they reached Mars Danny decided to land on Mars. It was rocky with no water. Perfect place for a.....

All of a sudden a big slimey round of protoplasm approached over the horizon, it looked like a "SLUG". It was leaving a river of ooze behind it. It was focused on Danny. His dad tried to get its attention but its big red eyes stayed on Danny. It was something Danny was wearing he

thought. AAAH! It was his calown. The bottle was in his pocket. he gave it to his dad to run with. His mom had ran back to the when the slug came in sight. Danny went back to the house to see what his mom was doing. When he got to the house he found midget martians running around the house pigging out on all there food. What a sight, martians running all over the place. Danny chased the them out of the house then he searched for his mom. She wasn't there the martians had got away with her.

## Conferences

Revision and editing can be facilitated through the use of conferences. Time during the writing period can be organized in many ways to facilitate conferencing, which can take many forms, including one-on-one with teacher or peer, group, older student, or parents. Conferencing should address content clarification and, later, editing for publication purposes. Plan a weekly schedule of conferencing appointments to ensure that each student's writing is seen at least once a week, make anecdotal comments, and log these for future reference.

During a 40-60 minute block of writing, spend the first ten to fifteen minutes with scheduled appointments. Students are responsible for bringing a current piece of writing from any curriculum area to the conference and being prepared to discuss it. After the scheduled appointments, circulate around the room to those children who need some immediate assistance. You can use this time for mini-conferences with those writers who need help.

After this time you may wish to conduct small group conferences, where the goal is to teach a specific skill to a group with a common weakness or need. For instance, a group of students may be having difficulty with quotation marks. Gather these students together and, in the context of their own writing, work on this skill.

For a thorough discussion about conducting conferences, refer to *Writing: Teacher and Children at Work* by Donald H. Graves.

## Sample Conference Questions

It is important that the teacher, peer or group responds to what the writer has written. Allow the writer to read the piece aloud before asking questions. Paraphrasing what was heard is an effective way to begin the conference.

1. Tell me about your work.
2. What are you trying to write about?
3. You said... (paraphrase what was heard)
4. Did you make any changes as you were writing?
5. Is there more you could add?
6. Are there too many things in it that you don't really need?
7. Tell me in detail what happens next.
8. What are you trying to get at?
9. How can I help?
10. Where is this leading you?
11. What next?
12. As a reader, I don't follow this part. Can you explain...?
13. Is there a part you aren't happy with? Why?
14. What's the most important thing you're saying in this piece?
15. The words on the page don't tell me that. How could you write it to let the reader know?

## Self-Editing Questions

### Content Chart<sup>7</sup>

- Did I say what I wanted to say clearly?
- Did I say it so that others will understand?
- Did I arrange the paragraphs in a logical and interesting way?
- Did I use the best possible words throughout my writing?
- Did my story have a good beginning, middle, and ending?
- Did I make the people and events in my story real, interesting, and worth reading about?

### Mechanics Chart

- Did I punctuate each sentence?
- Did I use punctuation in other appropriate places?
- Did I capitalize the first word of each sentence?
- Did I capitalize other appropriate words?
- Did I spell each word correctly or check my spelling for words I was unsure of?
- Did I use proper form on titles, margins, indenting, and other matters?
- Did I write in my best handwriting?

It is not always easy to find time to conference students. Strategies to help with this problem include having students revise and edit their work in pairs or individually.

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## Read-aloud

Having students read a piece of writing aloud is an effective method for getting students to hear if their piece makes sense. Reading aloud can be done one-on-one, or in small groups. Writers may not catch errors and confusion when they read a piece silently to themselves, but reading aloud often helps them to catch weaknesses in meaning. Reading aloud can also turn into a conference where the partner or group can question for clarification on such things as sequence or ambiguity.

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Cheryl MacDonald, teacher  
Father Kenneth Kearns School  
Sherwood Park Catholic  
Separate S.D.

## Home Editing

I have implemented home editing to assist me with the time-consuming job of individual student conferencing. I have found home editing a valuable asset to the writing process. It is an excellent way for parents to become involved in their child's writing. They see first hand how their child is progressing.

The children's writing is occasionally sent home for editing. Often some students ask me if they may take home other selections for their Mom or Dad to "look over" or to get some ideas.

I attach a brief note on the writing before it is taken home, indicating to the parent(s) what to focus on when editing, such as clarity, meaning or punctuation.

At "Meet the Teacher Night" I explain the editing process to the parents. We actually edit a writing sample. I explain that editing is not marking the piece as either right or wrong, nor is it simply correcting the child's work. We focus on meaning and clarifying the piece. This gives the parents hands-on experience and I find it easier myself. For those parents not in attendance, a sample of the edited writing is sent home.

---

## Peer and Older Group Editors

In some schools classrooms pair up for conferences. Students at the Grade 4-6 level pair up with Grades 1-3 and help revise and edit the younger students' work. This helps the older students hone their conferencing and revision skills. Once they have had practice with this, the older students can pair up within their division to help with conferencing. Schools with Grades 7-9 have an ideal opportunity to do further pairing of classrooms. The Grade 7-9 students can be paired up with Grade 4-6 for conferencing on a regular basis. There are benefits to all students, no matter what role they assume—writer or editor.

## Class Editing Board

There is a rotating list of students who take turns having specific editorial responsibilities for their class for brief periods of time. Editors, for example, might be in charge of editing all work for punctuation. Once the rota is complete they are responsible for training the next group of students responsible for this task. Other editorial roles may include proofreading for spelling errors, sequencing of ideas, paragraphing or sentence construction.

Through conferencing the writer shapes the piece to its final form. If the writer decides to publish the piece for some audience, final editing for punctuation, spelling and grammar must take place. It is at this stage that the writer now focuses on the mechanics of writing.

## Editing for Punctuation/Spelling/Grammar/Word Usage

With instruction and practice students can do some editing for mechanics independently or in pairs. Students can circle or box potential spelling errors.

the sterage things  
they saw down at  
Ereth and not in  
space. "What a sterage  
place said Saturn."  
"It's horrible." said Mars.  
"Let's go back up to

This proofreading skill provides important practice that leads to development in spelling. When a student shares these circled words with you, an opportune teaching moment is presented. Discuss alternatives for the spelling with the students. You can teach a spelling rule, generalization, or exception based on the circled word, and also elicit alternative spellings from the student. The student may also be directed to use a dictionary to search out the spelling independently.

Students can also box or circle a need for punctuation. Writers often know that some form of punctuation needs to be placed, but are unsure of which. Discuss together what type of punctuation needs to be placed. You can also provide lessons on an identified need if many students need assistance with the concept.

Students can draw lines under language that doesn't sound right. This can be done in conjunction with the read-aloud technique.



During the read-aloud, students can also edit for the placement of periods. When reading aloud, students often take a breath where a period naturally should be placed. The partner can check, as the writer reads aloud, to make sure a period is placed where the inflection occurs naturally. As well, the partner can listen for “and then’s.” If a writer connects sentences using these words over and over again, the partner can X them out and place a period in place of “and then.”

Students can underline words in their writing that they would like to make more accurate or interesting. Through conferencing or use of a thesaurus they can come up with alternatives.

Ellen Yakimyshyn, teacher  
Win Ferguson Community School  
Strathcona County Schools

### Student Writing Tracking Sheet

This sheet places the responsibility on the student to track who has been helping them with various stages of their writing. Editors initial the sheet for the student. In this way children become responsible for going through as much of the revision process as possible.

#### My Stories

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Title	Rough Copy	COPS	Proof Read (Who)	Published

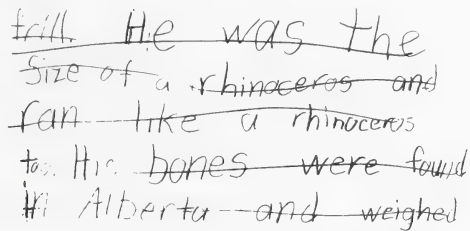


## Publishing

### Transcribing Skills

Once a student decides to publish a piece of writing, transcribing skills are required. These are the skills necessary to recopy a revised draft into a final polished form for an audience.

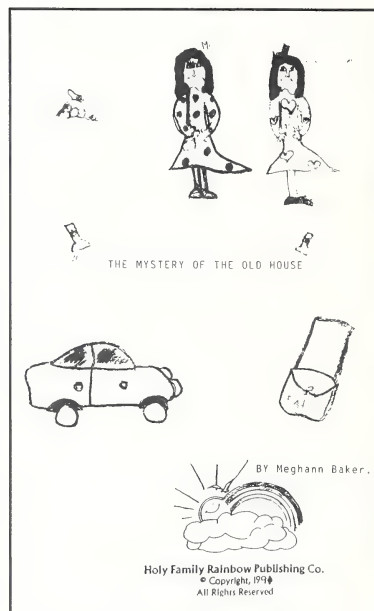
Transcribing is vastly different from composing. When transcribing the focus is on the act of printing, handwriting, or keyboarding, not content. Students will need to be taught techniques for keeping track of their place when transcribing. In this sample there is evidence that, as the student transcribed, he crossed out the line when completed. In this way the student avoided double-copying.



The image shows a sample of handwritten text on lined paper. The text is written in cursive and includes several lines that have been crossed out with a single horizontal line. The visible text is: "fill. He was the", "Size of a rhinoceros and", "fan-like a rhinoceros", "to. His bones were found", and "in Alberta--and weighed". The crossed-out lines indicate where the student transcribed and then corrected or revised the text.

Other techniques can be just as effective. What is important is that students are instructed in transcription techniques.

- Brainstorm with students difficulties they have encountered recopying their work, such as copying twice, missing marked words, missing directional arrows.
- Brainstorm any strategies students may already have in place to help with transcribing.
- Have students demonstrate these techniques to the class by using the overhead.
- Through lessons on the overhead/chart/blackboard, demonstrate strategies for transcribing, such as the use of crossing-off, checking, the use of highlighters to mark critical areas.
- For those students who are in the transcribing phase of their writing, provide mini review lessons on transcribing techniques.
- Have students who still encounter difficulties transcribing their work sit with a peer who can help them interpret the revision and editing marks on their drafts.
- Enlist the help of parents to transcribe work on the computer or typewriter. (See Rainbow Publishing Company, Link 5, p. 151)



## Celebrating and Sharing Writing

### Bookmaking

Once a piece of work has been transcribed, publishing in its final form can take place. One method for publishing is bookmaking. There is a multitude of ideas for having children make books. Some references are included in the bibliography.

Sheila Fraser, teacher  
Woodbridge Farms School  
Strathcona County Schools

### Compilation and Publication of a Class Anthology

Students involved in an authorship program through the school year compose their stories, memoirs, poems and plays using the word processor. At the end of the second term, students may submit their choices for the class anthology. These selections are revised and edited by the teacher and students. Pictures are used to enhance the writing and may be included in the final publication. When the stories are ready for print, pages are numbered and the stories indexed. The book is completed, including an acknowledgement and dedication page, table of contents that includes student names, title page and an autograph page.

Before the anthology is sent to the bindery, orders are taken. The book is bound with a hard cover at Atlas Book Bindery Ltd., in Edmonton. Check in your area for a local bindery that will assist with this kind of a project.

## Author of the Week

In some schools published work is displayed and circulated in the school library. Accompanying the display is a picture and biography of the author.

Blank pages are bound with the writing so that readers can respond to the author's work. Time is scheduled when the author will present his or her other work to the public. This celebration reinforces the importance of the entire writing process.

This can be done on a smaller scale in the classroom. Published pieces can be put on display in the class library. Blank pages can be bound with the published work so that classmates can respond to the author. A picture and biography can also be inserted.

## Tape-recording

Another way to publish writing is by making an audiocassette that can be used in a class listening centre. Students may still wish to publish their work in print format to accompany the tape.

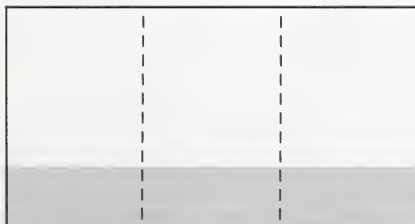
## Keeping Students' Writing

Writing is an ongoing process that occurs across all curriculum areas. Organizing and tracking students' writing can be overwhelming because the volume of writing can be tremendous. Included is a sample writing portfolio developed by New Sarepta Elementary School. Writing portfolios are also available from school supply stores and some publishers.

New Sarepta  
Elementary School  
County of Leduc #25



1. Fold up the bottom of a large piece of tag board.



2. Fold into three sections.

### Getting My Writing Started

#### Planning:

- .Webbing
- .Reading
- .Brainstorming

What is my purpose?  
What is my audience?  
What form will I use?

New Sarepta Elementary School

3. Apply self-adhesive stickers such as these examples to pocket and front cover. (These can be made in local high school I.A. class.)

### Working Copies (Drafts) of My Writing

How can I improve my writing by revising and editing?

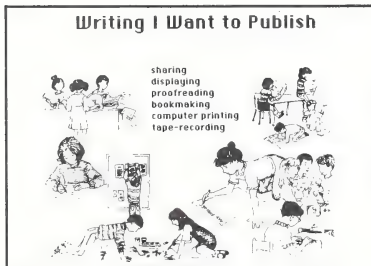
#### Could I:

- . add or leave out ideas? . make sentences clearer?
- . rearrange ideas? . make sentences more interesting?
- . make ideas clearer? . make better word choices?

What should I watch for when I proofread?

- . Have I punctuated my sentences properly?
- . Have I used capital letters correctly?
- . Did I spell words correctly?
- . Is my handwriting clear and easy to read?

### Writing I Want to Publish



## Summary

This Link addressed the importance of language to learning. The Program Continuity Policy singles out language as one of the most important influences in the lives of children. Teachers need to use a variety of strategies and activities to ensure that language is being used effectively by students to explore, construct and communicate meaning within their learning environment.



## Link 4

### Ensuring Continuity with Theme Planning





## Ensuring Continuity with Theme Planning

There are many connections across the subject areas of the curriculum. Integrating across content areas and providing ways for students to make connections enhance continuity and transfer of learning. (*Guide to Education: Elementary School Handbook ECS to Grade 6*).

Effective Planning will ensure continuity in children's learning experiences. It will lay the foundation for planning learning experiences that consistently support the principles of child development.

Planning is the teacher's tool for putting Program Continuity into action. Link 4 contains an overview of the planning process and a number of teachers' plans that demonstrate the process. Strategies for facilitating team planning are also shared.

### Planning for Integrated Instruction

#### Why Integrate?

Integrated Theme Planning can help students to:

- make connections
- develop an overall framework into which new learning can be incorporated
- consolidate learning by promoting the transfer of knowledge, skills, and attitudes from one context to another
- aid in the development of their own learning through contributing to the planning stage
- become more involved in their own learning.

Integrated Theme Planning can help teachers:

- save time and make the curriculum more manageable
- facilitate a more balanced emphasis on the whole child
- increase opportunities for creativity, autonomy, and flexibility in planning and implementation
- capitalize on local resources, including their own resources
- make learning more enjoyable and increase motivation and participation by the students
- utilize multi-leveilling and flexible grouping when all students are working on one topic.



## What is integration as it relates to the curriculum and planning?

**Program Continuity** describes a situation where elements of a child's learning experience are connected and related in meaningful ways.

**Curriculum integration** occurs when components of the curriculum at one grade or level are connected and related in meaningful ways.

Two requirements must be met for successful integration:

- **Content Integrity**—the strengths of the individual disciplines, as reflected in the Program of Studies learning outcomes, must be maintained.
- **Authenticity**—the connections that are made as part of the integrative process must be sensible and significant, not contrived. It is crucial that teachers model sound reasoning for children. If we relate curriculum components in sensible and creative ways we provide a valuable example for our students<sup>1</sup>.

## Planning Concerns at the Division II Level

At the Division II level children are often taught by more than one teacher, or are moved among flexible learning groups and work with a team of teachers. Coordinated planning is necessary to ensure continuity for students. Team planning enhances continuity in many areas, but it is particularly beneficial with respect to continuity across subject areas. (*Guide to Education: Elementary School Handbook ECS to Grade 6*)

Team planning requires a great deal of time. However the following schools' strategies demonstrate that, with a little creative problem solving, anything is possible.

### Banff Elementary

In 1989-90 a Team Planning time for all staff was implemented.

All Division I teachers meet each Wednesday commencing at 8:00 a.m. When students arrive at 8:25 a.m., Division I students are met by their Division II partners and share a joint program with the Grade 4-6 teachers until 9:00 a.m. In this way the teachers give up a half hour of their own time, and the school gives them another half hour of its time. On Friday, Division II teachers meet together, and Division I handles the instruction of all students. These partnered classes have become invaluable for creating more cross-graded activity at other times of the day.

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<sup>1</sup>S. Maitson. "Curriculum Integration," *Curriculum Design*, May 1989.

Teachers talk about their innovations, their teaching and learning, about specific student needs, and about program integration and articulation. Guest speakers have been invited to these “breakfast meetings” to address areas of concern. As well, a specific curriculum area may be discussed. Teachers bring student samples to the meetings to set standards for each grade level in each curriculum. Plans are under way this year to allow for more cross-graded team meetings.



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Banff Elementary School  
Banff S.D. #102

## Team Planning Day

Team Planning Time exists for the sole purpose of improving student learning in Banff Elementary School.

Improved student learning will result when teachers:

- are learners themselves
  - meet as a division to share practical organizational techniques for delivery of programs
  - meet as a division to communicate with each other at each grade (and eventually across divisions) to discuss philosophy, schools, teaching and curriculum
  - establish a climate that permits each other to share experiences, failures and successes and to receive feedback concerning students, ideas, and program directions
  - discuss specific ways of improving student learning
  - develop more team teaching and cross-grade teaching
  - break down barriers between grades, so as to understand we all share the same ultimate goal
  - have time for inservices.
-

## **New Sarepta Elementary School**

At this school all students must eat lunch in their home rooms. Teachers felt that valuable team planning time was being "eaten up" as they supervised their students. Older students were instructed in supervision and became responsible for helping supervise students in their home rooms. The students look after specific classrooms according to a timetable and a teacher circulates. Teachers within a division are freed up to hold team planning meetings.

The main purpose of these meetings is to plan ongoing themes. Teachers share ideas and resources, and construct unit plans together. Teachers feel that they are doing less planning outside of school hours, and a sense of continuity and support has grown from the initiative.

## **Malmo Elementary School**

To facilitate the planning of multi-age activities (See Link 5, Family Time) teachers are given time at the beginning of the year (first two instructional days) to plan together. Throughout the remainder of the year teachers get time during staff meetings to plan the Family Time Days together.

Many schools are moving towards having the monthly staff meeting become more of a team planning time. "Housekeeping details" are relayed to teachers in a weekly staff bulletin. This frees up time in the staff meeting to allow for joint planning across grade levels, whole school planning, and time for addressing concerns regarding curriculum, teaching strategies and resources.

Team Planning is more attractive to teachers if they are given the support to do so within school hours. The examples from Banff, New Sarepta and Malmo Elementary are solutions that have worked over a long period of time to support this worthwhile activity. The schools involved have commented on the importance and benefit of having weekly planning time. The consistency of these meetings contributes greatly to their planning effectiveness.

## **A Look at the Planning Process**

How do teachers plan the integration of curriculum? Effective planning starts with the knowledge of all curriculum content and objectives (Specific Learner Expectations) found in the Alberta Education Program of Studies.

Reviewing the various components of the Program of Studies will provide an overview before starting the planning process. *If you do not have the current Program of Studies, copies of individual components must be secured and read before the planning process starts.*

## **Planning for Integrated Instruction**

Program Continuity encourages and supports integrated instruction. However, there are many definitions and interpretations of the term integrated instruction. In the Policy it is described as planning and instruction that allows for the development of broader based concepts for students. This

type of planning is currently being referred to as “key idea planning”, or “big idea planning.” Simply put, this type of planning extends the notion of current theme planning and encourages a move away from narrowly focused units of study.

Teachers have been using themes for years as a method of curriculum delivery. Examples of typical themes at the Grade 4-6 levels are Mystery, The Sea, Government. **Key Ideas** extend and connect these themes or topics under a larger concept so that more powerful connections can be made for and discovered by students. For instance, Government might be studied under the key idea of “Change.” The key idea of Change may also include a science focus, subsuming topics such as how ecosystems change. Topics of study such as government and ecosystems would be related back to the broader concept of change.

### **Key Ideas Found in the Alberta Education Curriculum**

Key ideas can be found flowing through and between the subject areas of the elementary curriculum. They are reasonably challenging or profound ideas or concepts that we want students to learn about. Some examples, not an exhaustive list, include:

Change  
Uniqueness  
Order and Time  
Relationships/Interdependence  
Energy  
Identity  
Properties of Objects  
Problem Solving

These powerful, broader concepts found throughout the Program of Studies can be used to integrate planning and instruction. They can form the basis for the development of a set of related ideas and will integrate learning for students. Key ideas build and extend learning by basing integration on concepts—“the bigger picture”—rather than a single topic. Planning and instruction is always related back to the key idea for the learner, providing connected, more meaningful learning experiences.

Seeking to find a more effective way to connect learning and enhance continuity for their students, teachers and schools are just beginning to use key ideas for planning. The following process may assist you in developing more effective integrated plans.

### **Using Key Ideas to Generate Integrated Plans**

Planning for integrated learning involves maintaining a *balance among*:

- what we want students to know (Program of Studies)
- skills we want students to develop
- attitudes and dispositions essential to students in their learning and lives.



### Step 1

All planning should start with the Program of Studies. A thorough knowledge of curriculum expectations is necessary. Become familiar with expectations at several levels of the curriculum. In this way you will be prepared to enrich or modify instruction for individual students, who exhibit many levels of development.

You need to identify what your students already know and what they are interested in. These considerations lay the foundation for planning what comes next.

### Step 2

Once curriculum expectations are established you can begin to pull out and determine the key ideas that the year's planning will be focused around. By posing the planning question "What do I want my students to learn about \_\_\_\_\_ ?" brainstorming will be more focused during the next planning steps. Objectives and timelines are filled in for the year for all subject areas based on the program of studies and the key ideas. Using these broader concepts, meaningful connections between subjects can be made at this time.

If the school has departmentalized teaching it is important that all teachers coordinate their planning to enhance connections between the subject areas.

Steps 1 and 2 can happen simultaneously. These two steps lay the foundation for the next step.

Once overall timelines and objectives are filled in by subject area, and key ideas have been established, the next stage of the planning process can begin.

### Step 3

By posing the question "What do I want my students to learn about \_\_\_\_\_ ?", a set of Thematic Main Ideas will begin to develop. Brainstorming the main ideas contained within the key idea will help generate focal points for learning and ideas for investigation and review. Planning for logical sequencing of ideas and instruction can happen at this time.

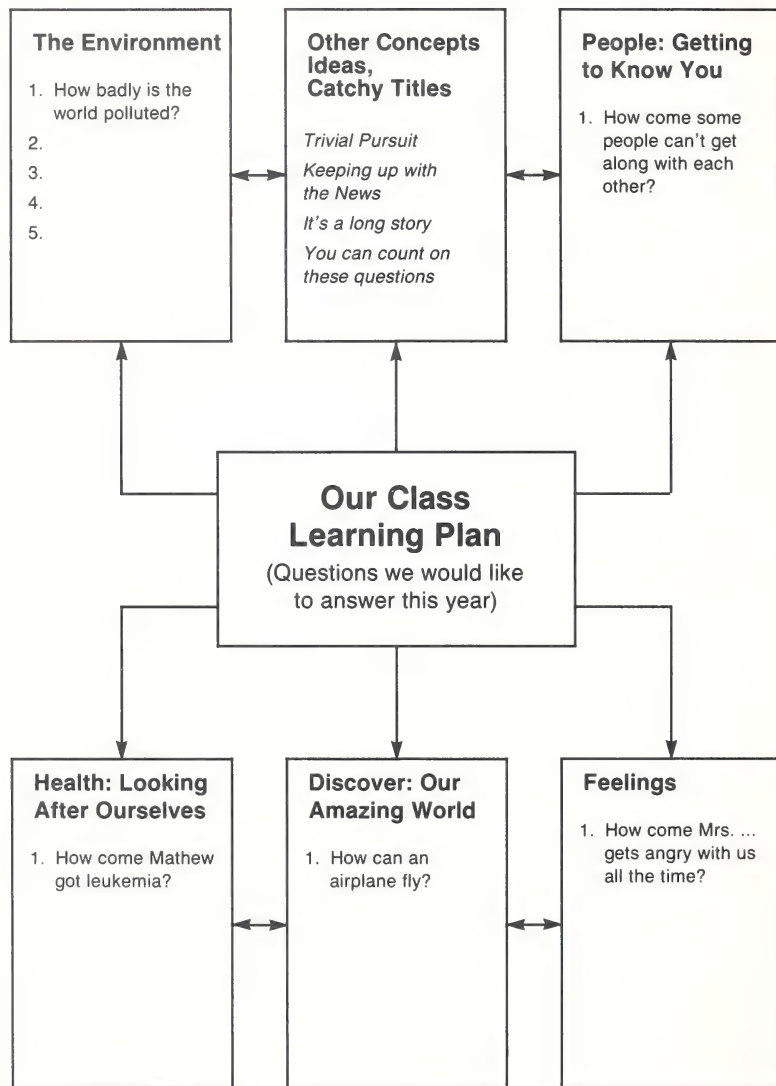
### Step 4

Curricular type units may be developed by identifying Sub-unit Topics that are to be investigated or studied. Questions to be investigated or resolved are developed within the topics. Skills arising from the Program of Studies are listed and developed within the context of the concept and topics being investigated.

Detailed unit plans are made listing Specific Learner Expectations from the Program of Studies. This step requires a lot of time brainstorming potential learning activities and connections to the learner expectations. Time spent in this part of the planning process helps ensure effective planning that will drive the learning process.

Unit plans can also be developed by asking for student input. Questions such as "What questions would you like answered from this study?" help develop student ownership in the planning process, and eventually the learning. A class might develop a Class Learning Plan, which could be added to by the students as they investigate the key idea. This gives them opportunities to identify areas of interest and potential connections.

John Proctor  
Supervisor of Programs  
County of Strathcona



### Step 5

Resources, including series, texts, and personal collections, are filled in. Remember that a particular series or text in a subject area does not drive the planning process; rather it is the Program of Studies that does.



Potential learning centres, library resources and other appropriate materials are listed that may help in establishing the topic of study. Connections to the community for resources/people are made at this time. Team planning meetings help facilitate the collection and sharing of resources.

### Step 6

At the end of a unit of study several forms of evaluation must take place. Teachers should evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching strategies, lessons, sequencing and integration of activities that were a part of the unit of study. Student work must be continually evaluated throughout the unit. This ongoing evaluation helps the teacher to alter daily plans to meet the individual needs of students. Student work can be evaluated by teacher and students at the end of a unit of study. These two forms of evaluation will help drive future planning.

The following outline of a Key Idea plan has been developed with the assistance of John Proctor, County of Strathcona, and the Grade 2 Planning Team, St. Mary School, Edmonton Catholic Schools.

1. The key idea of "Change" was identified as a focus for planning. All teachers started the planning process by going through the program of studies to identify where the concept of "Change" appeared in any curriculum area.
2. Teachers then asked the planning question: "What do I want my children to learn about change?"
3. Brainstorming followed. Teachers pulled out the following key ideas related to the concept of "Change":
  - i. Everything is constantly changing.
  - ii. Change is essential to survival.
  - iii. In meeting their needs, living things adapt differently to their environments.

The teachers chose point (iii) as the major focus for their planning.

4. Sub-unit topics were then established and included:
  - i. weather
  - ii. animal adaptations
  - iii. communities
5. Questions to be investigated or resolved were developed through brainstorming within the unit topics, for example:
  - i. How have animals adapted their physical capabilities in response to their survival needs?
  - ii. Why is change essential to survival?

These questions were always related back to the key ideas identified in Step 3.

6. Skills to be developed within the context of the concepts being investigated were listed. Such ideas are often delineated in Teacher Resource Manuals. For example:
  - Diaries will be used to record change in animal growth and weather. Skills: selection, recording information, drawing conclusions, graphing.

7. Identification of resources: fiction, non-fiction identified at all steps of the planning process. Resources need to be matched to the key ideas.
8. More detailed unit or sub-unit plans are completed to map out the day-to-day sequencing of activities and instruction.<sup>2</sup>



## Sample Plans

The following plans and accompanying descriptions serve as models of the planning process. The plans are not intended to be copied and used as is. Rather they should be used as examples of integrated planning. They provide excellent starting points from which your own planning can develop. Included are both long range and specific unit/theme plans.

The choice of a planning instrument is a personal one and there are many ways to make plans. The following examples utilize a variety of formats.

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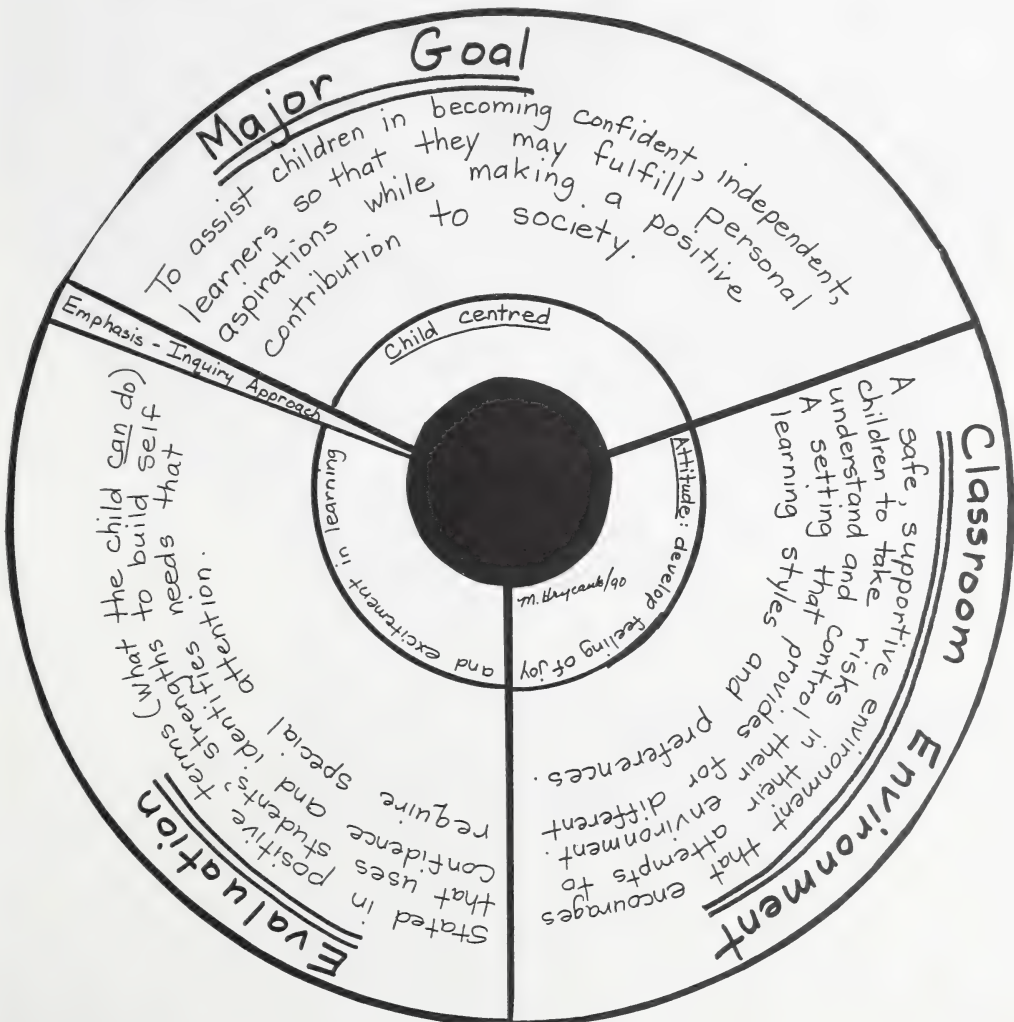
<sup>2</sup>A resource that may provide additional assistance with this type of planning is Jane Baskwill's *Connections A Child's Natural Learning Tool*, (Toronto, ON: Scholastic, 1990).

## Sample 1

Marilyn Hrycauk, teacher  
Nelson Heights School  
Lakeland Public S.D. #5460

The following long range plans are thematic and integrate through the subject areas where applicable. The language learning organizational framework of Exploring, Constructing, and Communicating creates the ongoing links that complete the learning cycle. The themes are arranged in a specific order to build sequentially on each other in a spiral. Although the circles are presented separately, they build on each other as the year progresses.

### Emphasis—Inquiry Approach







## Parent Newsletter

### Classroom Philosophy

"The ultimate aim of education is to develop the abilities of the individual in order to fulfill personal aspirations while making a positive contribution to society." (*Program of Studies*, Alberta Education) I believe this can best be accomplished when we use research about how humans learn to provide a curriculum framework for classroom experiences.

Research also demonstrates that children learn best in a safe, supportive environment that encourages children to take risks in their attempts to understand and control their environment. It also dictates a classroom environment that provides for different learning styles and preferences.

The curricular framework I will use for classroom experiences is taken from the new language arts curriculum that will become effective next September (1991). It is based on three principles:

1. Language learning is a connected, integrated endeavour that involves the whole child. (Language learning is applied, reinforced, and extended in all subject areas.)
2. Language learning is an active process of exploring, constructing, and communicating meaning.
3. Language learning builds upon what children already know and can do.

### Curricular Framework

Your child will begin new topics or themes by **exploring**. This forms the basis on which further learning takes place. At this time we will focus on exploring existing ideas and experiences.

We will provide life experiences wherever possible to enrich students' existing ones. Students will predict, question and set goals for future study. During these activities I will be evaluating students' existing knowledge to ensure they have enough background to carry on.

During activities involved with **constructing**, students take risks in attempting to construct meaning. They make associations and connections that expand their understanding and enjoyment. Analyzing information clarifies ongoing interpretations and responses, while synthesizing information and ideas consolidates understanding. Students will learn to monitor their understanding to assure meaning is not lost and they will respond to experiences through evaluation and reflection.

Students will be **communicating** in order to share their understanding. At this stage they will learn to express their ideas coherently and precisely, attending to accuracy of form and content. They will choose language structures and forms appropriate to the purpose of the communication and the audience for which it is designed. At this stage students will be publishing, dramatizing, public speaking, explaining, writing, or expressing themselves artistically.

My job as teacher is to facilitate this learning for each individual student. I will constantly be assessing students' needs and the learning environment I have created to assist children in making those important connections between new information and what they already know.

## Themes

Themes we will study during the year have been chosen from Alberta curriculum and coordinated through planning with the other elementary teachers in Nelson Heights School.

Time	Theme	Focus
1. September	People—Biographies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>analyzing character</li> <li>predicting</li> </ul>
2. October	Alberta: Its People in History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>developing research skills</li> </ul>
3. November	Mystery and Adventure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>describing setting, noting detail</li> </ul>
4. December	Water and Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>developing a scientific inquiry approach</li> </ul>
5. January	Folklore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>development of plot, oral presentation</li> </ul>
6. February	Energy/Matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>gathering, organizing and interpreting data</li> </ul>
7. March	Alberta: A Comparative Study with Quebec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop understanding and appreciation of two regions of Canada</li> </ul>
8. April	Our Bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>understanding structure, function and development of the body</li> </ul>
9. May	Animals and Nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>observing plant/animal characteristics and behaviour</li> </ul>
10. June	The Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>stating opinions, reasoning, predicting</li> </ul>



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## Sample 2

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The following example demonstrates the use of literature/novels for planning Language activities. Long range plans are also included. The first theme "Multiculturalism" is provided to demonstrate how the teacher develops long range plans into more specific unit plans.

The teacher also integrates this theme with Social Studies, focusing on World Geography and the Cultural Mosaic. In 1991 it was modified to "The Walls Come Crumbling Down."

---

Sheila Fraser, teacher  
Woodbridge Farms School  
Strathcona County Schools

### Grade Six Language Arts L.R.P.s 1990-1991

#### Unit One

**Theme:** Multiculturalism

**Timeline:** Approx. Sept./Oct. inclusive

#### A. Novel Study

1. *Underground to Canada* by Barbara Smucker

An Active Comprehension Model—students predict, set purposes, guide reading, create vocabulary lists. (Character analysis-search for freedom)

2. Group Novel Studies

*Amish Adventure*

*My Name is Paula Popowich*

*From Anna*

*Days of Terror*

Students will be divided into 4 groups to read 4 different novels, using the Active Comprehension Model as their format of study. As a group they will prepare and present a follow-up activity based on the theme of their novel. In each novel the character is struggling for personal freedom and identity.

#### Possible Activities:

1. Roleplaying (Character Analysis)
2. Readers' Theatre (Characters/Plot)
3. Plot diagrams—Timelines (Plot/History)
4. Family photo album (Plot/Characters)
5. Filmstrip (Plot)

#### Goals/Concepts/Skills/Strands

1. Students will learn the Parts of a Novel: Introduction (Characters, Setting); Plot (Crisis, Problems, Conflicts, Climax); Denouement; Conclusion; Theme (Main Idea throughout); Connecting Links (Recurring images); Literary techniques (Author's Style of Writing—use of character description, foreshadowing, imagery—simile, personification, hyperbole, etc.)
2. Study of the concepts of linear and circular journeys in novels.
3. In depth study of a novel as a form of literature.
4. Emphasis on listening/guided reading/discussion of issues.
5. Spelling: list of vocabulary used in novel (student)
  - usage in writing program
  - Spelldown—spelling bee competition using vocabulary lists
6. Drama—roleplay episodes to better understand the action and role of characters (step into their shoes).

7. Use of Creative Thinking Skills, i.e. Fluency, Flexibility, Originality, Evaluation, Mind Mapping

## **B. Roots-Routes Centre**

This runs concurrently with the novel study.

### **Goals, etc.**

Activities are designed to challenge and reinforce in all skill areas to complement the Reading program. A copy of the evaluation sheet is included to describe the activity and its purpose.

## **C. Writing Program**

Students will use word processors to compose, discuss (conference) and proofread original writing of stories, poetry and plays related to the theme of each unit. Use of creative thinking skills.

## **D. Supplementary Reading**

1. Books about children from other lands
2. Social Studies related books—Canada's Cultural Mosaic
3. Oral and written reports

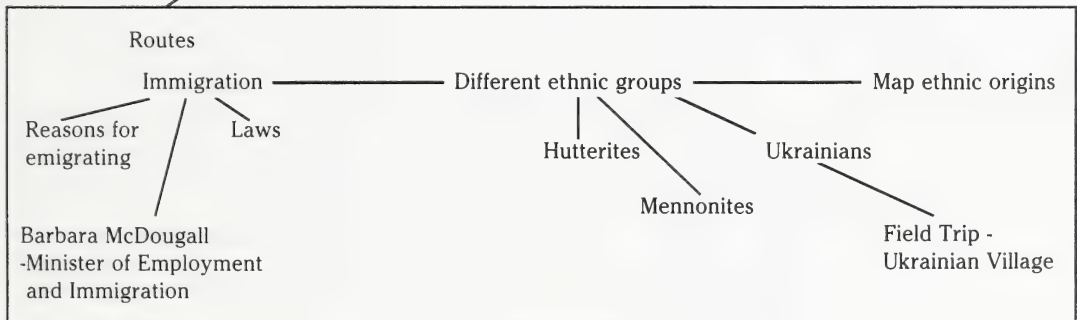
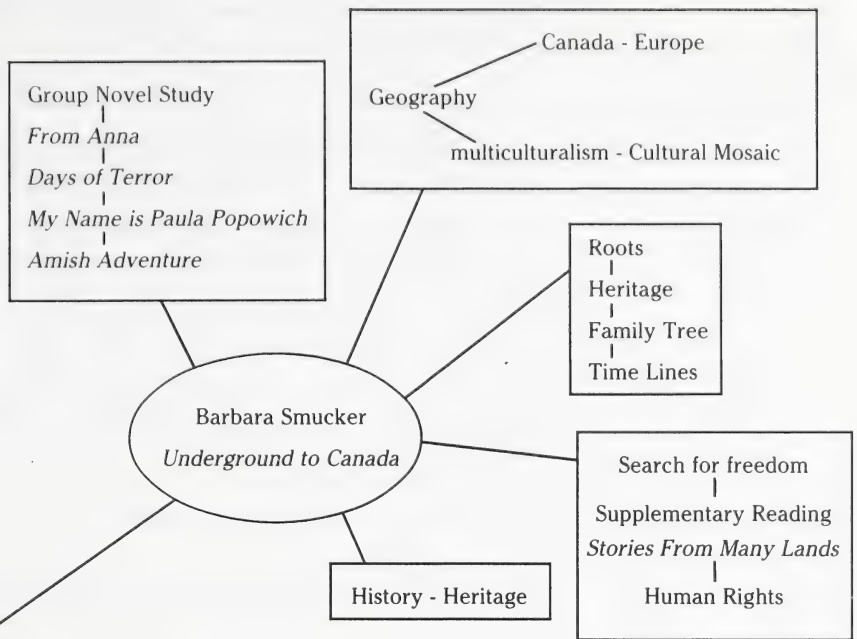
## **E. Resources**

1. Novels—as described
2. Materials as outlined on centre evaluation
3. Films, filmstrips related to the Multicultural theme

## **F. Evaluation**

1. Novel Study
  - Quiz
  - Notes
2. Group Novel Study
  - presentations
  - questioning
3. Centre - as per evaluation sheet

There is a strong emphasis on time management—each student will have a monthly calendar to follow.



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## Sample 3

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This poetry unit integrates cooperative learning strategies and activities. Note the variety of assessment strategies the teacher employs.

This teacher has developed her own planning model which enables her to consciously plan strategies which will address: teacher roles, student activities and assessment approaches. The model assists the teacher in planning a unit which includes both concrete experiences and opportunities for abstract conceptual development.

The planning model that follows helps teachers to isolate teaching strategies and student activities to ensure that the unit reflects a good balance of approaches. The strategies are not intended to be applied in a linear fashion, but integrated in the classroom.

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Loraine Farris, teacher  
Baturyn Elementary School  
Edmonton Public Schools

One plans lessons that move from experience to reflection to conceptualization and to experimentation. This model provides a framework, within which a teacher can design instruction in ways that accommodate individual differences.

## Teacher Planning Model

### Motivating

- Create an experience
  - Reflect and analyze
  - Relate to past knowledge or experience
  - Ask: What do I know?  
What do I want to know?
- 

### Teaching

- Develop concepts, skills and processes
  - Integrate reflective analysis into concepts
- 

### Coaching

- Practise defined givens
  - Practise and add of oneself
- 

### Facilitating

- Apply to new and more complex situations
- Analyze application for relevance
- Extend learning
- Relate to meaningful experiences

## Unit Planning

### Experiencing

- Poet Visit
  - Poetry readings
  - Discuss feelings generated by poetry
  - What do I know about poetry? (discuss)
  - What do I want to know about poetry?
- 

### Learning Facts

- Types of poems—couplets, free verse, quatrain, haiku, cinquain, limerick
  - Figures of speech—personification, simile, alliteration
  - Read and listen to a variety of poetry
  - Discuss and analyze a variety of poetry
- 

### Trying

- Write a variety of poems individually and cooperatively
  - Make a poetry book
  - Practise partner reading of a poem
  - Make an evaluation guide for "Readers' Theatre"
  - Test
- 

### Imagining

- Reader's Theatre
- Thematic Poetry Assignment
- Present to others
- Evaluate each other's presentations
- Analyze each other's poetry
- Poetry certificates

<b>Teacher Directed</b>	<b>Individual</b>	<b>Cooperative</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
Poet visit Poet readings			Group discussion
		Oral reading of a poem	Group assessment
Teach different types of poetry	Practise writing poetry	Practise writing poetry	Teacher assessment
	Read poetry		
		Discuss poetry	Teacher observation
Teach figures of speech	Write various forms		
		Make an assessment sheet	Teacher check
		Make T-charts for listening skills	Student assessment
	Poetry Test		Teacher scored
		Thematic Poetry Assignment	Group Assessment

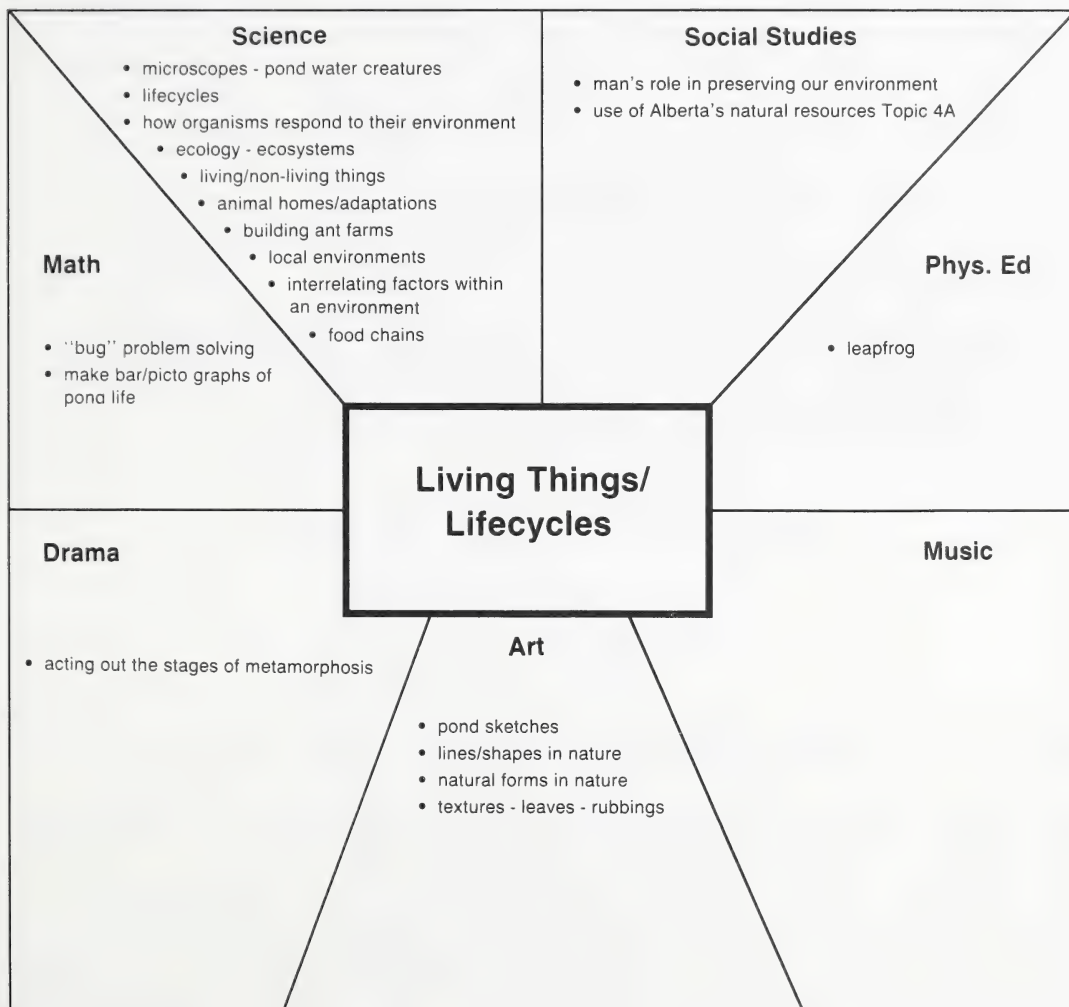


## Sample 4

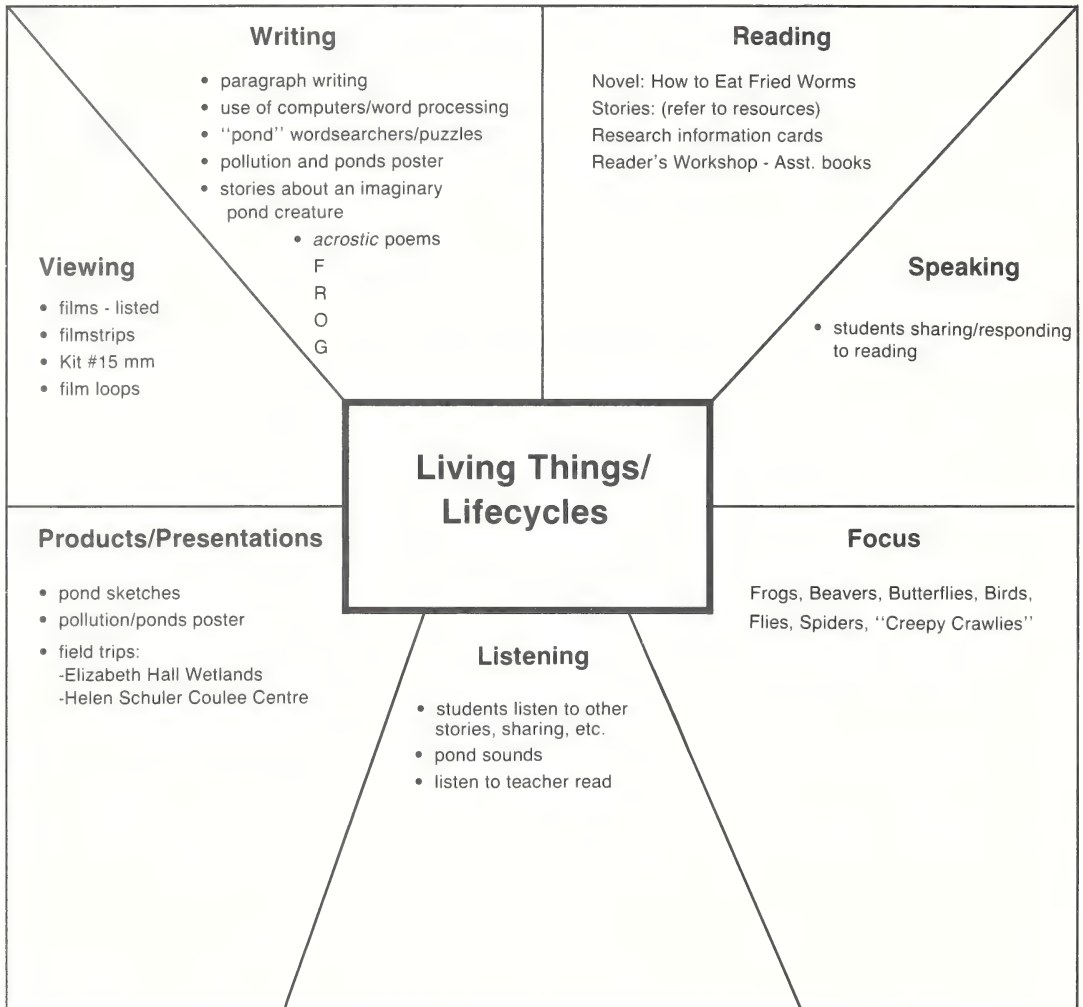
This plan integrates Science and Language under one theme: Living Things—Lifecycles. The overview demonstrates how topics are connected. Topics are then expanded in detailed unit plans.

Paul Bryant, teacher  
Nicholas Sheran Community School  
Lethbridge S.D. #51

### Subject Area Integration



## Activities



The above planning model sample is based on the structure of the 1982 Language Arts programs.

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## Sample 5

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This theme, "Careers and Getting a Job", illustrates the integration of more than two subject areas. Language, Health, Social Studies and Science are all connected in meaningful ways to the overall theme. This theme culminated in students applying for jobs. They learned how to write resumes, fill out applications, and how to prepare for an interview.

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Rob Wilson, teacher  
St. Anne School  
Fort McMurray Roman Catholic  
Separate S.D. #32

### Careers and Getting a Job

This is a theme called "Careers and Getting a Job." This theme topic allows the teacher to integrate objectives from across the curriculum under one banner.

The Language Arts component allows students to investigate various careers, make theme-related centres, publish a book on jobs for children, publish a resume and finally to apply for a job as teacher for half a day.

The health topic "Life Careers" integrates well, given the objectives directly relate to the theme, and the prescribed and suggested resources provide literature and audio-visual activities.

"Local Government" (Topic A) has been integrated because the basic issues of the unit can be expanded to include the various jobs of government officials (Reeve, Mayor, Aldermen, councillors...), which can be analyzed from the perspectives of: "What are the jobs of these people? What is the job of the electorate?" Students may also publish books on the jobs of government while simultaneously acquiring knowledge of content objectives. Also, it is important the teacher stress the job of government in helping people meet basic and secondary needs.

The science component is based upon Addison Wesley's Chapter 10 topic "Energy & Energy Problems." The theme integrates topics from the following subject areas:

Health (Theme III: Life Careers)  
Social Studies (Topic A: Local Government)  
Language Arts (Specific Objectives)  
Mathematics (this is not topic specific)  
Science (Energy & Energy Problems)

Below are listed, by subject area, the objectives covered in this unit of study.

#### Health: Theme III Life Careers

1. To develop a greater awareness of oneself as an individual and how one relates to others in society
  - interests: things one likes to do
  - abilities: things one does well
  - strengths: quality in yourself

2. To recognize that occupations may be classified in various ways; to classify jobs as:
  - product oriented
  - idea oriented
  - people oriented
3. To examine a variety of occupations related to one's interests and abilities
  - medical, dental, technical, educational, social
4. To recognize the reasons why individuals change occupations
  - change in interests, change in abilities, change in values, and change in living environment
5. To appreciate that work is an activity that gives meaning to one's life
  - Why people work - personal satisfaction
    - sense of achievement
    - financial reasons
6. To become aware that there is an increasing number of men and women in non-traditional roles
  - What are non-traditional roles?
    - male nurses, female doctors and lawyers, male telephone operators, female mechanics
  - Equal opportunities
7. To develop Career Awareness (Planning and Preparation)
  - How school habits relate to the world of work
    - habits developed in school
    - skills developed in school
    - developing responsibility for mastering subject matter
8. To prepare for the next grade
  - Orientation for Division III
    - student concerns such as workload, friendships, rules and procedures, success on tests, the building layout, school teams
    - how a junior high operates

### **Social Studies Objectives (Topic A: Local Government)**

9. To understand it is the major responsibility of local governments to deal with issues and concerns of the local community.
10. To understand how local governments resolve issues (surveys, bylaws, etc.)
11. To know the positions and roles of officials in a local government.
12. To understand that political decisions form the basis of bylaws and laws.
13. To understand how governments raise money to meet needs.
14. To acquire information from a variety of sources: (newspapers, newscast, magazines, pamphlets, people).
15. To analyze how government can affect people positively and negatively.
16. To write a book (in report form) with the outline provided by the teacher.
17. To develop respect for the democratic process as a means to meet ends.

### **Language Learning Objectives**

18. To read a variety of literature related to careers.
19. To list and categorize information.

20. To brainstorm ideas.
21. To publish a resume.
22. To publish, utilizing Authoring cycle, a book about jobs for young people.
23. To publish a book on various jobs in government.
24. To conduct and write interviews.
25. To develop, write and publish student centres related to the theme of careers.
26. To fill out various application forms.
27. To make an oral and written presentation on a specific career.
28. To be a participant in a real job interview.
29. To write letters of reference.
30. To make certificates.
31. To write stories (problem centred).
32. To write in a daily journal.
33. To edit written work.

### **Mathematical Objectives**

34. To write and solve word problems involving vocabulary used in career theme and drills, etc.

### **Science (Energy & Energy Problems)**

35. To investigate the roles (jobs) found in science.
36. To act as an environmental activist and suggest ideas for solving environmental solutions.
37. How energy is needed to do work.
38. To evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using coal, oil and natural gas as energy sources.
39. To investigate solar, geothermal, tidal and wind energy as alternative energy sources.
40. To articulate why the conservation of energy is so essential.

Curriculum Vitae

as  
 Craig Coolen  
 238 Cornwall Drive  
 Fort McMurray Alberta  
 T91-7724

Position Desired

Temporary teaching position.

Personal Information

Religion: Roman Catholic  
 Birth: November 14th 1978  
 Weight: 75 lbs  
 Height: 4'8"  
 Sex: Male  
 Marital Status: Single

Educational History

St. Anne School, 101 Brett Drive, Fort McMurray, Alberta

Other Educational Experience

- Swimming lessons - Took swimming lessons at the YMCA.
- Boy Scouts - Took cub program for two years.
- Young Rangers - Took young Rangers program for one year and learned how to survive in the wilderness.
- Minor Hockey - Have participated in Minor Hockey of Fort McMurray for six years.
- Soccer - Have participated in soccer for five years.

Job History

Babysitting - Babysat for my mom and when I am in grade seven I will be taking a babysitting course.

Shoveling Driveway - Have shoveled my driveway several times.

Limbsawing - Helped my grandfather cut down Christmas trees.

Distributing Flyers - Distributed flyers for the Minor Hockey.

Hobbies and Interests

- Am interested in reading, writing, and sports. Always read before I go to bed and usually write in my own personal diary. Take part in karate, hockey, soccer, swimming, guitar and saxophone. like to build models.

Special Skills

- Know a lot about computers, calculators and tractors. Am able to play soccer, hockey, karate, swimming, guitar and saxophone very well.

References

- Father: Lance, 193 Clachrone Crescent, Fort McMurray Alberta, T91-7724.
- Ryan Colleseros, 293 Beaton Place, Fort McMurray Alberta, T91-2426



Ryan Ballesteros  
St. Anne School  
Fort McMurray Roman Catholic  
Separate S.D. #32

Ryan Ballesteros  
5123 Beaman Pl.  
Ft. McMurray Alta.  
T4K 2B4

November 27<sup>th</sup> 1989

Hiring Committee  
101 Brett Dr.  
St. McMurray Alta.

JB

Dear Hiring Committee  
Re: Letter of Reference

Craig Caplen is a very smart young man. He can answer the toughest mathematical questions. He is very good at science, gym, math, and social studies. He is able to teach all subjects in the Catholic school. He loves teaching young children.

Craig has much experience in teaching. He has taught for five years at St. Anne School, Nova Scotia. Children say that he was the best teacher that they ever had. He taught grade 6.

Sincerely Yours,  
Ryan Ballesteros  
Ryan Ballesteros

## Summary

This Link looks at the planning process in detail and provides actual samples of teachers' plans. Education Program Continuity supports integrated planning and instruction because it helps to develop connections for students—connections between subjects, connections from grade level to grade level and from teacher to teacher.



## Link 5

### Connections to the Home and Community





## Connections to the Home and Community

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The partnerships established among home, community and school are probably the most significant feature of a student's learning environment in the early childhood and elementary school years.

Parents are the first educators of their children and teaching/learning is an ongoing element of that relationship. Schools should enable families to continue to be involved with children's education. The bridge between home and school enables parents and teachers to exchange information and thereby support student learning and enhance continuity for children. The Program Continuity Policy states that schools will ensure continuity in children's learning experiences. To the extent that the bridge is firmly built, the child will experience continuity or smooth transitions between home and school. (*Guide to Education, Elementary School Handbook, ECS to Grade 6*)

As a consequence, it is important that teachers and schools address "connections to the home." The first school/home connections should be established in a child's first year at school, usually E.C.S. (kindergarten). According to the Program Continuity Policy, direct parental involvement in all activities related to their children's educational programs is especially significant. This involvement serves to strengthen the connections made between home and school throughout the elementary years and impacts learning in a significant way. Link 5 provides many suggestions for strengthening school/home/community links.

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## Section 1: Reflection

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The following reflection, and the “Parents and the Classroom” and “Community and the Classroom” activities, have been provided to help you consider ways in which you involve both home and community in your classroom.

1. Currently, what am I doing to encourage parent participation in my classroom program?
2. What can I do to further encourage parent participation in my classroom program?
3. What is being done to promote parent participation at the school level? Is there some way that I can assist or take advantage of what is being done?
4. In what ways have I made connections to “home” in my program?
5. Currently what am I doing to connect to the community?
6. Am I doing anything to encourage community participation in my classroom?
7. What is being done to promote community participation at the school level? Is there some way that I can assist or take advantage of what is being done?

As a closure to this Reflection, perform a mental tour of your school. This "Audit Your School" Checklist is provided by the Alberta Teachers' Association and is contained in the Public Relations Kit for Principals. The kit contains many ideas for effectively promoting your school and classroom and it is available to Alberta teachers without charge through the Alberta Teachers' Association, Edmonton.

Alberta Teachers' Association  
Public Relations Workshop



## Audit Your School

To the average parent who visits your school perhaps once or twice a year, or not at all, the school building is a forbidding and, many times a disturbing facility. It is not always possible to change the building to make it enticing but it is possible to make the very most of what is there. As you complete this mental tour of your school consider the way an outsider might view your school building and the staff and students within.

### EXTERIOR

1. Is the flag raised and lowered every day the school is open? Yes ☐ No ☐
2. Is the flag in a good state of repair? Yes ☐ No ☐
3. Are the sidewalks leading from the street to the main school entrances kept free of snow during the winter months? Yes ☐ No ☐
4. Is graffiti removed from the exterior walls of the school immediately? Yes ☐ No ☐
5. As the school's administrator, do you do a quick check of the school yard and school's exterior on a daily or weekly basis? Yes ☐ No ☐
6. Are the grounds immediately surrounding your school kept tidy? Yes ☐ No ☐
7. Are you concerned about the private property immediately adjacent to your school? Yes ☐ No ☐
8. Is there parking space specifically designated for visitors and clearly marked as such? Yes ☐ No ☐
9. Are broken windows or damaged fixtures that are visible from the main street repaired as soon as possible? Yes ☐ No ☐
10. Do the windows which face the street promote students' work and are they continuously kept neat and clean? Yes ☐ No ☐

### INTERIOR

1. What does the notice to visitors on the entrance to your school say?

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2. Is it a welcome notice, rather than an authoritarian notice? Yes ☐ No ☐
3. Is there some indication, a map or an arrow, inside each external door to indicate the way to the general office? Yes ☐ No ☐
4. Does the entrance to your school look inviting? Yes ☐ No ☐
5. Does the name of the principal appear on the entrance door of the school so that visitors know who to ask for? Yes ☐ No ☐
6. Is the school secretary (or are the secretaries) aware of the importance of PR when dealing with visitors either in person or on the phone? Yes ☐ No ☐
7. Do they make visitors feel welcome and do they emphasize the basic courtesies? Yes ☐ No ☐
8. Is the school visibly a people place? Yes ☐ No ☐
9. Are there prominent displays of student work? Yes ☐ No ☐
10. Are such displays kept neat and organized? Yes ☐ No ☐
11. Do you have good literature on your school and what it is teaching that visitors can take with them? Yes ☐ No ☐
12. Are visitors actively encouraged to visit your school? Yes ☐ No ☐

13. Are the staff aware of the importance of public relations with visitors to the school – are they friendly and helpful? Yes ☐ No ☐
14. Do you invite parents to have coffee/lunch with the students/staff? Yes ☐ No ☐
15. Do you have students who can act as guides to show visitors around the school? Yes ☐ No ☐
16. Have you invited any of the following groups or members of such groups to have lunch with the staff students within the past year?
 

a) Ministerial Association	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
b) Chamber of Commerce	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
c) City Council	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
d) MLA	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
e) School Board	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
f) Real Estate Association	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
g) Rotary Club/Lions Club, etc.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

17. Are the classrooms clearly numbered? Yes ☐ No ☐
18. Is there a map showing the classroom layout displayed prominently in the entrance? Yes ☐ No ☐
19. Are teachers' names clearly marked on the outside of the classroom doors (where feasible)? Yes ☐ No ☐
20. Are the water fountains kept clean and functional? Yes ☐ No ☐
21. Are the hallways checked regularly for garbage? Yes ☐ No ☐
22. Are the lockers kept shut – to keep the mess inside? Yes ☐ No ☐
23. Do you have a PR plan which has been developed collegially by all the staff involved in your school? Yes ☐ No ☐

There are obviously many more questions that could be asked. These few are offered as a starting point and food for thought.



## Parents and the Classroom

Getting parents in your classroom means having an open door policy. Before you open your door there are some important factors to consider.

1. Ideally, with what would you want parents assisting, outside and in your classroom?

- 

- 

- 

- 

- 

- 

2. Do you want parents to work independently or will they need direction from you?

3. Are there time scheduling concerns that will affect when you would like parents in the room?

- 

- 

-

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## Opening Your Doors

Parent involvement can take many forms:

- Many parents, due to work, only connect to the school by assisting at home, e.g., reading to their child, supporting extra-curricular work.
- Parents in the school, e.g., assisting with field trips, reading to children, preparing learning activities, working with centres.
- Parents in Advisory Roles, e.g., serving on committees.

There are benefits for all stakeholders when parents are involved with the school.

For students:

- improved student attitudes, conduct and attendance
- improved classroom performance
- active parent support for instructional programs
- augmented instructional resources.

For parents:

- familiarity with the school
- stronger ties with school staff as well as neighbours and others who are volunteering along with them
- more information about what is going on in the community and at the school
- skills and talents are recognized
- training and experiences for future endeavour
- learning more about helping their own child
- experiencing the satisfaction of dealing with children, helping students directly or indirectly.

---

## To Get Parents Involved in the Classroom

1. Establish a list of the activities you would like parents to get involved with.
2. Send a letter home requesting parental assistance. Be specific regarding the kinds of jobs you would like done in the classroom or at home. For classroom help, try doing "Help Wanted" ads. If you simply want parents to drop in and interact with their child and class, indicate this.

Dear Parents:

We need some of you to help us with the following jobs for the next few months. We'd like at least two people (or more as indicated) to sign up for each job so that you can share the responsibility. Please sign your name and telephone number in the space provided so that we can call you when we need you. Thank you. It's nice to know that you are there to help!

#### Librarians

Set up and maintain our book corner by getting donations and over-seeing the book check-out list.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Photographers

Take pictures for our class photo album of our work, play, and special events.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Scrap Material Gatherers

Check out stores and factories for donations of recyclable materials.

Place	Material	Use at School
Lumberyard	wood scraps	sculptures, bookends, boats, trains

name and phone no. \_\_\_\_\_

Dairy	empty containers	space helmets, waste baskets, storage, and pull toys
-------	------------------	--

name and phone no. \_\_\_\_\_

Department Store	appliance boxes	buildings, tunnels, to climb on, in and over, puppet theater
------------------	-----------------	--

name and phone no. \_\_\_\_\_

Soft Drink Company	plastic crates	tiny shelves and carrying cases
--------------------	----------------	---------------------------------

name and phone no. \_\_\_\_\_

Newspaper	roll ends	drawing, cutting
-----------	-----------	------------------

name and phone no. \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Caller** Set up a network to notify parents of school closings and events.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

**Drivers for Trips** (Indicate days available.)

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Animal Caretaker** Weekend care for classroom pets.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Outdoor Maintenance Helpers** Help keep up our outdoor equipment.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Indoor Maintenance Helpers** Help keep up our indoor equipment.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Snack Makers**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

**Clean-up Committee** Help us tidy up after the special parent/child events. Hopefully, each parent will have to do it only once.

EVENT

HELPER

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Project Assistant** Come volunteer and have a good time helping us do our projects in the following areas:

woodworking \_\_\_\_\_

cooking \_\_\_\_\_

arts and crafts \_\_\_\_\_

**Career/Hobby Mentor** During the year, we will be teaching about careers and hobbies. Come in and share yours.

NAME

CAREER OR HOBBY

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# We'd Like Your Help

Dear Parents,

We will be \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_

and would love to have you be a part of it.

We need \_\_\_\_\_.

If you can help, let \_\_\_\_\_

know, as soon as possible.

Thank you for your continuing cooperation.



\_\_\_\_\_  
Your Child's Teacher

## Job Questionnaire

Dear Parents:

We will be discussing careers next week and your child will be telling us about what you do. So, please use the questionnaire below to discuss your job with your child. (Remember, homemaking is an important career!) Then, fill out and have your child return it to school. We hope that you will be able to join us to share your job and/or hobby some time this year. Thank you for your help.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (of parent)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone No.

Where do you work? \_\_\_\_\_

What are your responsibilities? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What is your favourite part of the job? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Could our class visit the place where you work?

What are your hobbies? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be willing to share your work or hobby with the other children in our class? \_\_\_\_\_

What day of the week and time would be most convenient for you to visit?  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Prepare your room so that parents feel welcome. Establish a "Communications Centre" so that parents have a place that is both welcoming and informative.

If parents are volunteering they will need to know specifically what you would like them to do. For example, at centres they could assist the children in completing activities. Make sure specific directions are included.

**Communications Center**

• theme of the week •

growing seedlings into plants

TRY MAKING THIS AT HOME

JUGGING BALLS

MAKE SQUARES

□ □ □ then

2 cups dried beans

SEW □

Place BEANS in CLOTH

PLEASE READ

BOOK CHECKOUT

Book Checkout

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_

5 \_\_\_\_\_

6 \_\_\_\_\_

7 \_\_\_\_\_

YOU ARE INVITED

PHONIC IN THE PARK

INVITATION

WEDNESDAY 12:30-2:00

OUR NEWSLETTER

SMALL TRACE NEWSLETTER

CRAFTS

PARENTING

SPORT INQUIRY

ARTS

SCHOOL MAP

SCRAP BOX

- | Subject |       | Topic |        | Lesson |       | Material |       |
|---------|-------|-------|--------|--------|-------|----------|-------|
| MON     | NOTES | Mon   | Fuller | 10:00  | 10:30 | 11:00    | 11:30 |
| TUE     | NOTES | Tue   | Fuller | 10:00  | 10:30 | 11:00    | 11:30 |
| WED     | NOTES | Wed   | Fuller | 10:00  | 10:30 | 11:00    | 11:30 |



- Don't forget to acknowledge volunteers. Schools do this in many ways, including year end celebrations, bulletin boards acknowledging people, special name tags, etc. What is important is that the volunteers know that they are appreciated.



Community Volunteer Centre  
Lethbridge, Alberta

### Volunteer Service Record

Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Start	Finish	Assignments	Hours

## Some Suggestions for Writing Parent Newsletters

Many parents are unable to come into the classroom and volunteer. It is important to keep all parents informed about the class program on a regular basis. Class newsletters are one effective way of transmitting this information.

- The content should deal with what is coming up in your classroom. It can contain news and notes about class happenings. More importantly, it can contain information about specific curriculum issues arising in the classroom.
- Review on-going activities that were reported last time, for example: "The writing program described in the last letter is continuing."
- Try to cover content or specific topics and skills that parents might find useful when discussing school with their children. Be sure to include anything that could be reinforced or expanded upon at home, for example: "The children will be expected to know..."
- Include student work samples. Have students each select a piece of their best work to be included and stapled with the class newsletter that goes to their home.
- Try to find amusing cartoons, anecdotes or quotations to add humour to your letters.
- Try adding a photograph of a class activity to the letter.
- Use the letter as a means of initiating home projects for theme-related activities.

Consider having students write, edit, compile and publish the class newsletter.

## Community and the Classroom

Involving the community also means having an **open door policy**. It requires effort from both teachers and students to seek out community contacts and establish ongoing relationships. Before you open your door to the community there are some important factors to consider:

1. Ideally, in what role(s) do you see members of the larger community assisting with the classroom, the program?
2. Do you want students to establish contacts and work independently with community members?
3. Are there scheduling concerns that will affect times when community members can participate with students or in the program?

## Getting the Community Involved in the Classroom and Program

1. Establish a list of areas in which you would like to involve the community.
2. Brainstorm with students, staff and parents for contacts.
3. Students and teacher write and send letters to the contacts, outlining needs, timelines and benefits of getting involved.
4. Prepare your classroom so that community members feel welcome when they visit and participate in the program. They will need to know specifically what it is you want them to do.
5. Don't forget to acknowledge community participation. Schools do this in many ways. A "thank you" generated from the class is important. Place the responsibility on the students for this important step.

---

## Section 2: Outstanding Examples of School/Home Community Links

---

Start off this section by brainstorming and completing the "Links to the Home and Community" puzzle. The puzzle activity can be done individually or in groups. Its purpose is to get you thinking about ways that the school can connect to both home and community.

### Home and Community Links

To get you thinking about Home and Community links with school, brainstorm the solutions to the puzzle on the next page. Fill in the missing letters to spell out ways in which the home and community can become involved with the school. Transfer the filled-in letters to the solution blanks with the matching numbers. The final solution will tell you what this section is about.



R \_ \_ D B \_ \_ \_ \_  
 5  
 \_ D \_ T W \_ I \_ \_ N \_  
 4 17  
 \_ I E \_ \_ \_ I P \_  
 46 15 36  
 \_ O O K I \_ G  
 8 39  
 \_ E \_ T O R \_ R \_ G R \_ M S  
 3 13 41 9  
 C A R \_ E \_ \_ E \_ \_ L O P \_ E \_ \_  
 7 22 33 52 27  
 H \_ \_ P \_ N \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ F \_ \_ E  
 14 35  
 P R \_ \_ I D \_ \_ A \_ E R I \_ \_ S  
 19 11 44 21  
 \_ O M \_ \_ T \_ E \_ W \_ \_ K  
 47 51 40 25  
 D E \_ O \_ S \_ R A \_ I \_ G  
 10 18 55 50 49  
 B \_ I L \_ T H \_ \_ G \_  
 53

P \_ \_ \_ G \_ M \_ \_  
 38 42 29  
 \_ \_ L L \_ T \_ \_ E S  
 37 20 28  
 W \_ \_ K \_ X P \_ R I \_ \_ \_ E  
 2 23  
 D \_ N \_ T \_ \_ \_ S  
 48 30  
 L \_ \_ \_ A R \_ A \_ \_ E  
 43 56 32  
 T \_ \_ \_  
 24  
 P \_ B L \_ \_ I \_ G  
 12 1 6  
 P R \_ P \_ R \_ \_ \_  
 31  
 \_ H O \_ \_ \_ G  
 34 26 54  
 C \_ \_ P \_ N \_ S P \_ \_ S O R \_ \_ \_ P  
 16 45

## Solution

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29

30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40

41 42 43 44 45 46

47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56

See page 152 for solution to puzzle.

# Explaining Program Continuity to Parents

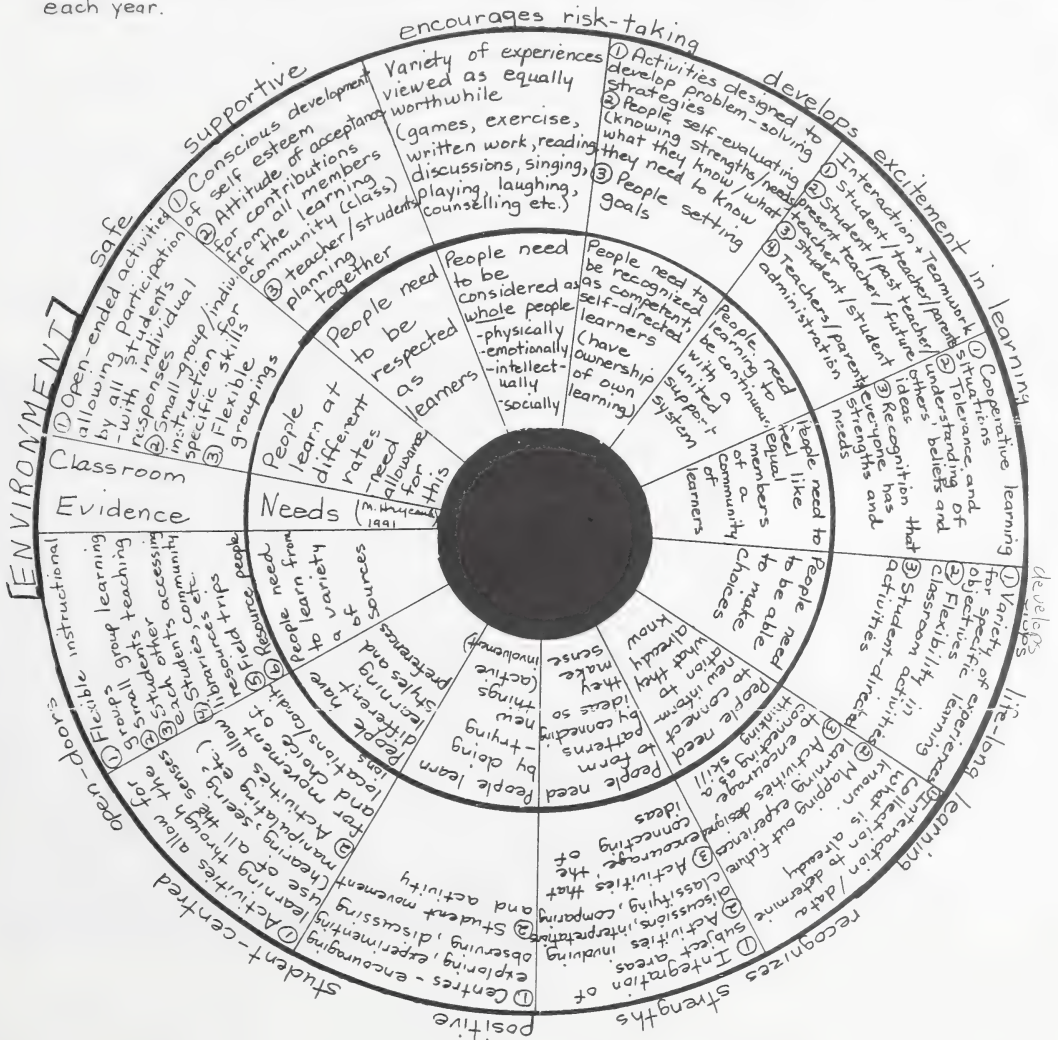
This teacher felt it was important to address the question "What is Program Continuity?" with parents. In order to explain it clearly she read the Policy Statement and tried to put it into practical terms. What could parents expect to see in a classroom that was meeting the Program Continuity Policy requirements? Following is the format the teacher used. To facilitate the explanation and discussion the policy has been organized into two broad areas: Classroom Evidence and Needs.

Marilyn Hrycauk, teacher  
Nelson Heights School  
Lakeland Public S.D. #5460

## PROGRAM CONTINUITY

by Marilyn Hrycauk 1991

Program Continuity refers to approaches for organizing programs which enable the maximum growth or progress through the levels of curriculum for every child each year.





## Family Time at Malmo School

The objective of the ongoing Family Time Project at Malmo School is to bring students and staff together in a relationship which resembles the nuclear family in order to:

- enhance development of acceptable social behaviours
- enhance individual self-concept of students
- encourage acceptance of each individual as a valued member of the school community and to foster attitudes of caring and sharing within that community
- encourage transfer of attitudes developed in the above statements to the students' out-of-school lives so that they may become responsible members of society at large.

At Malmo School the first two days of school are conducted in family groupings in order to:

- provide students with the opportunity to meet teachers and students from different grade levels and to see different areas of the school
- provide teachers with the opportunity to meet students from different grade levels
- smooth the transition from home to school by placing older students with their younger siblings. This provides a familiar face to assist the younger students.
- provide time for the school to finalize student placement based on the students that arrive at school on the first day. (Malmo has a high turnover of students from year to year which often results in the opening or closing of a new classroom after one or two days of school. Family groupings allow the school to make the necessary arrangements before students find out where they will be placed.)





## Logistics

Students at Malmo School are placed into family groups at the end of September. They remain in the same family groups for the entire year. When school begins in September, the students spend the first two days of school with their family group from the previous year. New students are randomly placed in the existing family groups, with brothers and sisters often placed in the same family grouping.

Each family group is assigned a colour for a name. This family group will then rotate through four different teachers during the first two days of school. Each teacher will plan an activity (for half a day) to complete with each family group. The teacher will repeat the same activity four times with four different family groups. During the last half hour of the second day, students are told which classroom they will be in for the year. They then proceed to meet their teacher and go home for a good night's rest.

On the first day of school, each teacher is given an alphabetical list of all the students in the school and the colour for their family group. Each teacher can then use this information to direct students to the proper location. Since teachers change classrooms and teachers change schools from year to year, students are not always certain where they are to go this year.

A master schedule and a school map are posted in the hallway. If, during the first two days of school, students forget where they are to be, they refer to the master schedule and then go to the appropriate classroom. This allows students and parents to be less dependent on a teacher for the information.

Katie Petersen, student  
Malmo Elementary School

Matt Brechfell, student  
Malmo Elementary School

Family Time

Family time is when groups of children from every grade from 1-6 get together and do projects and activities. Family time is a good time to meet other people and make new friends. For the more friends the less lonely. Sometimes student teachers help with family time.

Last year the family groups did a unit on the environment. We did lots of neat things like making pictures on the computers and we went to Southgate shopping centre for a Math talk that is when we go the math and answer mathematical questions about different things.

I think that family time is important because it teaches the older children leadership and improves the relationship between students and teachers. Up

### FAMILY TIME

At Malmo school we have something called FAMILY TIME it is a fun and interesting concept.

FAMILY TIME is when groups of children from kindergarten to grade six get together and do different activities. There are usually 2-3 kids from each grade in each group. You almost never work with your own teacher. You work in the classroom of your group's teacher or you rotate through centers in classrooms, the gym or sometimes the library and the staff room. It happens on the first two days of school and once every month. We have family groups to make new friends and meet new people and new teachers. We have it, so that on the first days of school we don't get assigned to a teacher, settled in and then have to change because of the numbers of kids that came or didn't come.

Family time is important for many reasons. I like family times on the first two days because I get to meet new kids, see some old friends, and see some old teachers and some new teachers. I like family time during the year because you get to do activities out of the classroom that are not hard work. Other things that I like are that you get a break from doing stuff in your classroom. It's beneficial because older kids learn how to teach younger kids. It makes you feel important. The younger kids get to have older kids helping them. It helps the little kids know more kids. It also helps them know someone who can help them and as they feel more comfortable in the school, as who are new get to meet some new people.

The only thing I would change about family groups is I would make some of the activities a bit harder for the older children because sometimes it's a bit boring. Other wise it's fine.

In all I would rate family time a 3 star. worth while subject and I would recommend it for other schools.

## Video Newsletter

Try sending a newsletter home in a video cassette! This is what one Grade 5/6 class regularly does, to the delight of both students and parents.

Following is a sample of what might be included on a Video Newsletter<sup>1</sup>.

Joanne Randall, teacher  
Malmo Elementary School  
Edmonton Public Schools

**VIDEO NEWSLETTER  
FROM  
T.L.G. 2**

**Mrs. Joanne Randall**

May 18, 1990

Dear Parents

The children are excited about sharing their independent projects (student goals) on video with you. As each child shares their project, you will enjoy a wide variety of topics that demonstrate the uniqueness and interest of each child. As the children share, you will hear them reflect about their learning. Their reflections will include many of the following thoughts.


**INDEPENDENT PROJECTS - REFLECTIONS**

1. What steps did you go through to complete your project?
2. What strategies did you use?
3. What strategies did you learn?
4. What difficulties did you experience? How did you overcome them?
5. What went well for you? Why?
6. What feelings did you experience over the course of this project? Give specific examples and why you felt the way you did.
7. What do you know now that you never knew before completing your project?
8. What would you do differently if you were to do the project over again?
9. What will the other students learn from your project? Will they enjoy your project? Why or why not? List your reasons.

After viewing, please initial or sign the class list. Comments are welcome.

I trust you'll view this video as an effective and valuable tool for demonstrating student learning and growth as I do.

**Lights ..... Camera .... Action!**



<sup>1</sup>Joanne Randall, *Profiling Student Growth*. (Edmonton: Edmonton Public School Board, 1988)

## Weekly Journal to the Home<sup>2</sup>

Near Parents,

Every Friday the children will be writing their reflections on their learning for the past week. This is to:

1. keep you informed about the happenings in our classroom.
2. give children ownership for their learning
3. assist children to synthesize their learning
4. assist children to develop higher levels of thinking.

Please take the time to read the response back in writing your thoughts. Return Monday morning with your child. Thank you for assisting the home/school partnership which is so essential to your child's learning.

i Joanne Randall

<sup>1</sup>Excerpt of weekly reflections on learning to parents:

Dear: Mom + Dad

This week at school we have Day Books that each day we have to write about something. I'm going to tell you about lot's of stuff that happened this week.

Here's a funny one. On Friday in the morning we were writing in our Day Books when Mrs.R asked Lindsay what she was eating and Lindsay said a cookie, so of course Mrs.R said "if you don't have enough for the class then don't eat it now, and so Lindsay reaches into her back pack and pulls out a big container of cookies, HA HA HA.

Next week I have a luncheon date with Mrs.R so I have to bring a bag lunch. Mrs.R will supply the drinks. Tim, Michael, Laura and Claire are also going to be

Sep 14/90

<sup>2</sup>Excerpt

Dear Mom + Dad

This week at school I thought was very fun. Here's why.

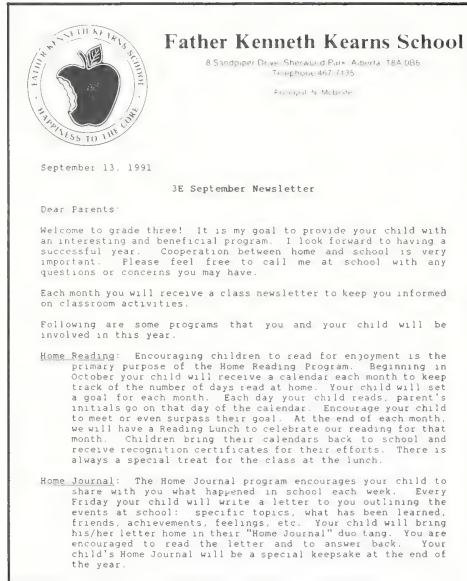
On Monday we had science. Our science with Mrs.B we were working on evaporation. We put hot water in a kettle and then boiled it. After we put the kettle on the ground and held a pan over it. We held a thermometer in the middle of the kettle and the pan and the mercury got so high on the thermometer that the bulb popped. (The bulb wasn't supposed to pop). Oh by the way we were doing this so that the steam of the kettle would make the pan get steamed up and so drops of water would drop and it worked. The mercury stained a chair and the kettle. We were lucky it didn't stain and chairs huh. We had a

Feb. 4-8/91

<sup>2</sup>Joanne Randall. Profiling Student Growth

# Home Journal

Cheryl MacDonald, teacher  
Father Kenneth Kearns School  
Sherwood Park Catholic  
Separate S.D.



## Mentorship Program

Stephen Leppard  
Malmo Elementary School  
Edmonton Public Schools

### Mentorship in Action

At Malmo School, we believe that learning is enhanced by the experience we provide in school, and by the people who touch a child's life.

Our mentorship program adds a new dimension to learning. During the school year, students work with volunteer mentors to learn more about a specific topic. Whether it's to talk about nature, dogs, or the United Kingdom, our mentors enthusiastically share their information, knowledge and skills.

Business people, homemakers, scientists, post-secondary students and senior citizens . . . mentors represent all walks of life. Their contributions of time have a positive effect on a student's overall education.

The mentorship program benefits Malmo students in many ways. They have an opportunity to work with an interested and experienced mentor, and they can also share their new-found knowledge with their peers in the regular classroom.

These students have been identified by Malmo teachers as children who will benefit from gaining additional information. They are highly motivated and exceptionally interested in learning beyond the curriculum. Mentors can help these students to explore real life problems effectively.

Each mentor will not only affect the learning of a student but gain information about our school and the surrounding community.

#### How does it work?

Mentors decide on a topic and work with the child's teacher to deliver a program that will benefit everyone involved. They may choose to work with one child, or with more than one at a time.

Mentors also select an appropriate time to work with students, depending on the topic. Weekly, bi-weekly, and monthly times may be arranged. Meetings can be held at the school, during the day, or at times when a field trip is necessary. Any cost incurred by the mentor will be verified by the program coordinator for reimbursement.

Mentors decide how much time they wish to commit to the program. The length of the project can range from three weeks to three months. The mentors' schedule will also dictate the length of each meeting.



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## Locally Developed Complementary Courses

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Tony Hampshire, teacher  
Millarville Community School  
Foothills S.D. #38

### Peer Tutoring

Having Grades 1-8 under the same roof provides Millarville Community School with a somewhat different educational atmosphere than either a pure elementary or junior high school. At Millarville, positive interactions between older and younger students were always encouraged by staff, and a supportive student culture was established and maintained. Students from different grades liked each other but rarely participated in each other's learning.

During the early 1980's Millarville staff began developing a student-centered instructional program that addressed differing learning styles, encouraged creative expression, and challenged the gifts and talents of all students. In 1985 this program was enriched by Millarville's designation as a Community School, with an increased emphasis on cooperative learning and cross graded activities. This in turn led to increased educational interaction between older and younger students, and later that year to the development of a locally developed junior high complementary course that places Grade 7 and 8 student tutors into elementary classrooms.



These "Peer Tutors" work under the direction of MCS staff to assist teachers with lesson presentations, lead small groups and individually tutor younger students. Peer Tutors assist with lesson plans, keep logs to record their experiences, and reflect upon their own learning in personal journals.

Experience with this program over the past six years has clearly shown that there are mutual benefits for older and younger students. Both partners are actively engaged in meaningful, personal and cooperative learning experiences. Younger students enjoy the attention of their tutors and are eager to learn with them. Similarly, junior high students in the role of "learned friend" develop patience, personal responsibility, a greater appreciation for the teaching/learning process and often enhanced self-esteem. Peer Tutoring has proven to be an unqualified success for the individuals involved as well as a cornerstone of the MCS philosophy of "Community of Learners."





**Foothills School Division No. 38**  
**Junior High School Application for Approval of**  
**Locally Developed Complementary Courses**

1. Course Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Peer Tutoring \_\_\_\_\_

2. Hours of Instruction: \_\_\_\_\_ 76 hours \_\_\_\_\_

3. Course Objectives:

- TLW experience preparing materials to work with individual students (under teacher direction).
- TLW experience working one to one with a younger student requiring extra help.
- TLW experience listening to a student read and asking questions.
- TLW experience evaluating their own ability to communicate, to accept responsibility and to work with other people.
- TLW experience developing a set of plans to be used in a real life situation.
- TLW experience observing strengths and weaknesses in both themselves and the students they work with (to be applied in the preparation of classroom materials and activities).

4. Course Content Headings

- a) Student teacher/student learner role.
- b) Developing mini-centres.
- c) Utilizing student strengths in classroom planning and interaction.

5. Evaluation Criteria

- a) Input from classroom teacher as to
  - effectiveness of material
  - efficiency
  - ability to work with others
- b) Weekly log or journal was kept as to activities.
- c) Three major projects to do which relate directly to their role as a tutor. These are evaluated by the classroom teacher and the coordinating teacher.
- d) Inservice workshop prior to classroom experience.

Principal's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Millarville \_\_\_\_\_

Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_ May 20/89 \_\_\_\_\_

---

TEDDY  
THORNE

## Peer tutoring

I got into peer tutoring and because I got bumped out of art. I had another choice other than peer tutoring but I chose peer tutoring because I enjoy working with kids and teaching could be a career for me.

While I was peer tutoring I made some observations: That kids who had trouble reading at the beginning of the year could read more fluently at the end of the year. It made me feel good inside to know that I helped some of the kids learn to read. I would start out by asking them questions about each page they read, and then help them sound out each word. It was a rewarding experience for me.

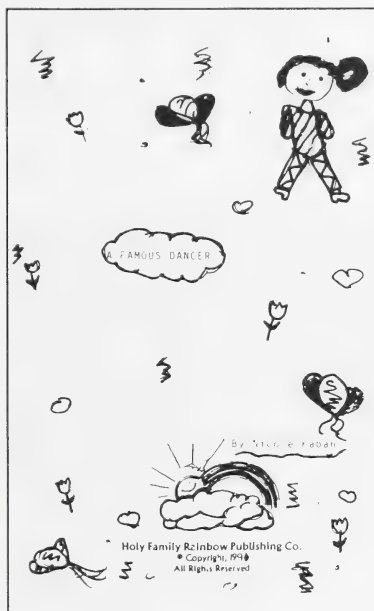
I also got along with the homeroom teacher very well. And was able to follow her guidelines.



## Rainbow Publishing Company

At this school parents are responsible for publishing children's writing. Parents volunteer and are scheduled to work in the Rainbow Publishing Company—a work area located in the school.

When a child has completed a piece of writing it is taken down to the publishing area, where a parent volunteer types the piece for the student. Then it is given back to the student so that they may complete the illustrations before the final publishing process. When the illustrations are finished the book is returned to the publishing area for laminating and binding by parent volunteers. Completed books are put on display in the office, entrance area, library, and display cases.



## Student Buddy System

Students are paired with a "buddy" from the class. This has several advantages and purposes. When a student is absent, the buddy is responsible for telephoning after school to inform them of the work covered and assignments given that day. Should homework difficulties arise, buddies phone and discuss the problem with each other. If there is an extended absence due to illness, a buddy picks up and delivers work to the buddy who is ill. This system helps to develop cooperation and responsibility in the students.

## Home Calendar and Reading Program

I have set up a home reading program in my class to encourage children to read at home. This program is successful and parent feedback very positive.

At the beginning of each month students receive calendars. We fill in the dates and the activities happening that month. The children decorate the calendars and then mount them on construction paper to make them special and attractive, rather than a just a piece of paper to be forgotten at the bottom of their school bag.

Each student sets their own reading goal for the month (25 days). The goal is written on the calendar to remind them of their personal expectation. Each day that the child reads at home, the parent initials that day on the calendar. I go over this at "Meet the Teacher Night." Additionally I give suggestions of time to read, interesting or appropriate books.

At the end of the month we have a "reading lunch" celebration. Children bring their calendars back to school and receive recognition certificates for their efforts. I make the reading lunch special. We eat together, encourage each other to meet or exceed our goals and most of all have fun. At each lunch we always have a special treat, a movie or a guest story teller.

---

### Solution to puzzle on page 140

Read Books	Play Games
Edit Writing	Tell Stories
Field Trips	Work Experience
Cooking	Donations
Mentor Programs	Library Aide
Career Development	Time
Help in the Office	Publishing
Provide Materials	Preparing
Committee Work	Phoning
Demonstrating	Company Sponsorship
Build Things	

### Home and Community Involvement Is an Important Part of Continuity

## Summary

This Link focused on the connections that can be made between Home and School. Parent involvement is singled out in the policy as being significant. Therefore, teachers and schools must continue to reflect on the practices that encourage and support parents becoming involved in the education of their children.



## Link 6

### Program Continuity— The Big Picture





## Program Continuity - The Big Picture

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Successfully putting the Program Continuity Policy into action requires some overall reflection and a scheme to apply the connections made in the previous Links. Consideration must be given to establishing a climate for change. Program integrity attempts to ensure that the “whole” is still compatible with the individual “parts.”

Looking at the bigger picture from a school/district perspective is also addressed. Several districts’ plans for the implementation of the policy have been included for your reflection.



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## Part I

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### Reflections on Connections

This resource has attempted to address some of the main elements of Program Continuity.

In Link 1 connections are made between knowledge of both normative and dynamic dimensions of child development and instructional practices. These connections are strengthened in Link 2, when they are applied to designing appropriate physical, social and emotional environments for students. Developmentally appropriate practice lies at the heart of the policy. These connections must be strengthened through ongoing reflective teaching practice.

A weekly teaching log is a useful, ongoing method for continued reflecting on students, learning and teaching. Jot down reflections about your teaching in a book that you keep for this purpose. Areas may include teaching successes (strategies used), questions you seek answers to, frustrations, concerns about students. Remember, observation should include several perspectives:

- **Spotlight**—seeing things up close
- **Floodlight**—step back and try to see the bigger picture occasionally.

Teaching logs may be shared at staff meetings or with colleagues so that one can receive feedback and suggestions. Logs can also be used as a private reflective journal of professional experience.

Links 3 and 4 connect the Policy to everyday teaching reality. Planning effectively helps to ensure that connections are made for students in ways that support the principles of child development. The strategies provided in Link 4 are intended to assist teachers in making connections across subject boundaries.

Connections to the home are addressed in Link 5. Link 6 serves to complete the chain of connections that form the Program Continuity Policy by having readers consider “the big picture.”

Educators have been challenged to address all of the major areas of the policy. Examples of good practice gathered from around the province demonstrate that educators are taking this challenge seriously, with creativity and energy.

Two words to keep in mind when reflecting on the policy are:

**Open Door** Program Continuity is an “Open Door Policy”—connections are not possible unless the doors are open from school to home, teacher to teacher, teacher to administrator, and schools to district offices. Opening doors may be the first step for some schools and teachers as they begin addressing the Program Continuity Policy.

**Connectedness** Education Program Continuity is a label given to good practices (administrative, curricular planning and instructional) that focus on students. It is a policy that encourages connections being made for students.

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Guide to Education  
Alberta Education, 1991  
pp. 17-18

## **Continuity Between Home and School**

Parents are the first and ongoing educators of their children. Schools should enable families to continue their involvement with their children's education. The bridge between home and school enables parents and teachers to exchange information and thereby support student learning. To the extent that the bridge is firmly built, the child will experience continuity or smooth transitions between home and school.

## **Continuity Across Subject Areas**

There are many connections across the subject areas of the curriculum. Integrating across content areas and providing ways for students to make connections enhance continuity and transfer of learning. Thus, students continue to see the world as a connected whole instead of in fragmented bits.

## **Continuity from Grade Level to Grade Level Within the Program**

The Program of Studies is organized by subject areas and grade levels. The grade levels form a continuum that is designed to meet the developmental level and learning pace of the majority of children.

Most students will complete a grade level in every subject during each year of school. However, within every group of children there will be a range of individual differences. Individual students may progress more rapidly than others. Some children may require more time to consolidate learning in some curriculum areas rather than in others.

Flexibility in planning for individual student needs is encouraged. Appropriate action for a child who has mastered the objectives of a course of studies at one grade level may include either enrichment at that level or movement onto the next level of the curriculum in that subject area. Age, the number of years in school, or the time of year, need not be the determining factors of a student's movement along the curriculum continuum.

## **Continuity Between Curriculum and Assessment**

At the root of program continuity is the teacher's knowledge of each student. Planning for continuity in learning experiences needs to be based on the teacher's knowledge of what the student currently knows and what needs to be learned next. For such diagnostic planning, methods of assessing student progress used by teachers need to reflect the intent, goals and standards of the **Program of Studies**.

Periodic comparisons of the curriculum standards to external measures such as the Grade 3 and Grade 6 Provincial Achievement Tests will also assist in maintaining the overall performance of educational systems.

## **Continuity from Teacher to Teacher**

When students are taught by more than one teacher or move into another learning group, coordination by teachers will be necessary to ensure continuity for the students. Coordinated planning enhances continuity in many areas, but it is particularly beneficial with respect to continuity across subject areas.

## **Continuity from School to School**

When changing schools, student learning will be enhanced by smooth transitions. As little disruption as possible to the student will occur when the originating schools and teachers provide full information on student attainment levels and individual learning traits. The information can be referenced directly to the **Program of Studies** to assist the receiving school in providing the needed continuity in learning.

The Education Program Continuity Policy (ECS through Grade 6) is available, upon written request, from Central Support Services, 11160 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, T5K 0L2

The following questions may help to focus reflection and discussion at a school or personal level.

1. In what ways are you encouraging continuity between home and school?
2. In what ways are you addressing continuity between subject areas—in your class, across grade levels?
3. Are there practices in place that enhance continuity from grade level to grade level within the program?
4. What is done at the school level, and what are you doing personally to ensure continuity of experiences from teacher to teacher?
5. What practices are in place to demonstrate continuity between curriculum and assessment?
6. Are practices in place to ensure continuity from school to school? What do you do at a school classroom level to help students as they move from one location in the district/province to another? What do you do to help students who transfer in?

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## Part II

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### Establishing a Climate for Change<sup>1</sup>

Change is unlikely to occur in an atmosphere that accepts present practice as satisfactory. Developing an attitude of questioning and examination and a sense of concern with the status quo encourages a climate for change. School staff who want to successfully implement program continuity will establish the kind of climate in the school that will make change acceptable and desirable.

### Preparing Yourself for Change

As teachers begin to question the present school situation and decide that changes in the school environment could be made to facilitate learning through the program continuity philosophy, some or all of the following suggestions may be tried:

- **Study the literature**, especially the articles on individualization and continuous progress and on ways to integrate subject areas.
- **Informal discussions**, based on the literature readings, leading to a variety of inservice and professional development opportunities.
- **Resource personnel consultations**, from district consultative staff, neighbouring schools, the universities and colleges, and Alberta Education.
- **Visitations**
  - to other schools in the jurisdiction to view processes of organization and program development
  - to schools outside the system that have incorporated specific facets of program continuity into their school program.
- **Initial explorations**, devoted to specific, short-term projects in the school, designed to “test” the desired change.

### Preparing Students for Change

Students who have been in classrooms with certain kinds of routines, who have experienced teaching/learning strategies from a whole-class, teacher-directed perspective, will need preparation for more child-centered approaches.

- Experiences in making choices (including the use of materials, the pacing of activities, the choice and depth of content areas and the selection of learning strategies)

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<sup>1</sup>Parts II and III of this Link have been adapted by Alan Rich, Alberta Education, Red Deer Regional Office, from material prepared by Ron Livermore, Alberta Education, Edmonton Regional Office.

- Experiences in independent use of media and other resources
- Experiences in independent study, which includes skill development in this area
- Experiences in relating to a number of teachers (including peers, classroom teachers, parent volunteers and community resource personnel)
- Experiences in self-responsibility for learning, in more-structured and less-structured situations
- Experiences leading to competence and confidence in self-evaluation (including skills in this area as the student moves from teacher-directed activities to student-teacher goal-setting conferences, to the use of strategies and tools for self-evaluation.

## **Preparing the Community for Change**

A change in the educational process may be regarded with apprehension by an uninformed public. The school should attempt to keep the parents and community informed about and, if possible, involved in all stages of the transitions along the journey called program continuity. Formal discussions between teachers and parents at interview times and informal interaction on a day-to-day basis, by establishing an open-door policy that welcomes parents to school, can do much to allay concerns. A School Council, comprised of parents and teachers, to act as an advisory committee and coordinate study groups, can help develop a core of parents who recognize the need for change. Parent volunteers, working closely with a teacher or group of teachers, can enlarge the core and assist greatly in achieving community acceptance of proposed changes.



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## Part III

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### Program Integrity

Learning is continuous, first in a personal sense, demanding respect for the individual learner. It is also continuous in that no experience is without context, without links with what has gone before or what follows. The task of parents and teachers is to help learners recognize and use those links to understand their experiences. It is to give learners tools to develop new or alternative ways of making those links. This linking must be fostered from grade to grade, from subject to subject, from home and community to school.<sup>2</sup>

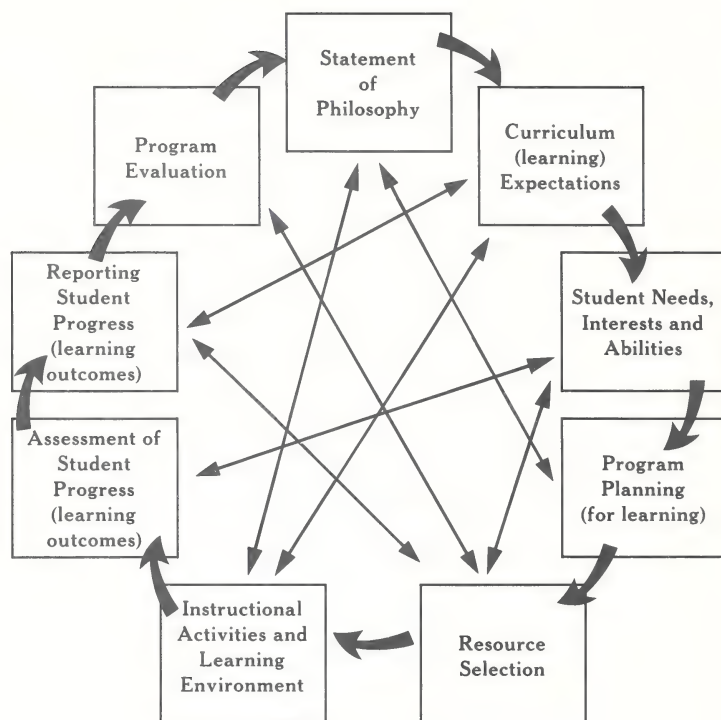
A student's needs from hour to hour in his or her day, as well as the other links listed above, will provide for the integrity of the student's school program. As the principles of program continuity forge and link the management of a student's learning, from the declaration of a school philosophy to the selection of developmentally appropriate resources, to the reporting to parents of student learning outcomes, there is a natural, consistent thread of understanding.

The diagram on the next page<sup>3</sup> can provide a visual statement of such program integrity. The management of learning may be expressed as the continuous, clockwise flow around the wheel. The links from each section clearly delineate the characteristics of the next. At the same time, there should also be consistency across the wheel, from any section to another. A resource will not be selected without reference to the school's philosophy. The learning environment will take a student's interests into account. Assessment of student progress will match curriculum expectations. And so on. Any decision made in the elements of the program wheel will have impact upon all the other elements and must take them into account.

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<sup>2</sup>*Program Continuity: Elementary Education in Action*. Alberta Education, 1990.

<sup>3</sup>adapted from the work of Ron Livermore, Alberta Education, Edmonton Regional Office.



## Development of School Philosophy

The school staff should develop together a short philosophical statement that clearly explains the mission and purposes of their school. Such a statement should be acceptable to the community as the type of school setting in which their children can learn, and it must be so functional that it forms the baseline for all decisions made with respect to the learning situation. If the school has not developed their mission statement the following stem will help generate ideas.

**“At this school we ..., because we believe that ... .”**

From the philosophical base, a logical step is to write the school objectives that answer such questions as:

- What kind of environment do we wish to establish for students?
- Where shall we place our major emphasis (cognitive, affective, or psycho-motor development) or what balance shall we strike?
- What priorities shall we set for this year?
- How do we evaluate whether our objectives have been met?

## **Development of Instructional Objectives**

The school's philosophy will take into account the expectations of the provincial Program of Studies and will match such expectations to the needs, interests and abilities of the students in order to determine the instructional objectives.

The following types of questions are posed as a school is deciding how to utilize available resources to best meet the instructional objectives selected:

### **Human**

- In what ways may the staff be deployed to foster program continuity?  
Consider
  - cooperative teaching
  - team teaching
  - differentiated staffing
  - specialists
- How can additional human resources be made available?  
Consider
  - parent and community volunteers
  - high school students
  - post-secondary students

### **Physical**

- In what ways can we utilize the physical facilities to foster program continuity?  
Consider
  - flexible instructional areas
  - flexible instructional groupings
  - community use programs

### **Financial**

- In what ways can we better allocate funds to foster program continuity?  
Consider
  - participation in budget decisions
  - selection of non-graded materials
  - multi-age groupings
  - differentiated staffing
  - use of community resources
  - corporate sponsorships

## Development of Instructional Methodology

The establishment of instructional objectives that are well defined and appropriate lead to a program developed to meet both individual and common needs of learners. Such a program is never static, but remains open-ended so that it can be adjusted to permit every student the experience of success. A variety of instructional methodologies should be flexibly employed.

Consider the following questions as you reflect upon and review various instructional teaching strategies:

- Do I employ strategies that reflect a diagnostic approach to the learner?
- Do I employ different strategies to accommodate individual learning styles and students' own rates of progress?
- Do I maintain flexible groupings for instruction according to identified needs?

Consider

- independent study
- partners
- small groups
- large group activities

- Do I use strategies that respect divergent thinking and risk taking?
- Do I provide sufficient choice to students to allow for individual interests?
- Do I include record keeping that is continuous, accurate and purposeful?
- Do I assess individual progress rather than emphasize comparison with other individuals or the group?

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## Part IV

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### School District Perspectives

The intents of the continuity policy can be achieved in many different ways. Implementation plans developed by schools and jurisdictions should be tailored to local needs.

During the planning and implementation period, school authorities are to:

- review their existing policies and procedures in light of the continuity policy
- determine which of their existing policies or procedures support continuity for students
- develop or revise policies or procedures as needed for policy implementation, and
- provide inservice for staff, parents and community members on program continuity and the policies and procedures that support continuity for students.

*It is intended that these activities will be completed by August 31, 1993.<sup>4</sup>*

Districts have handled the implementation in many different ways.

### Lethbridge

Teachers initially identified the practices within their own classrooms that gave support to the policy. They focused on those strategies that were child-centred. Lists were compiled at staff meetings, and photographs taken of practices that supported the policy. Presentations to the community highlighting district-wide continuity practices followed.

In this way teachers confirmed for themselves that they were already doing many things in their schools that supported Program Continuity. After the presentations to the community were completed, teachers refocused and developed an action plan and committee for continued implementation of the policy. The purpose of the committee was to discuss future initiatives at both the district and school level. They continue to address what continuity means for them, what gets in their way, their doubts, fears and continued successes.

Starting this process at teacher level developed teacher ownership right at the beginning. In this way it is hoped that commitment and support of policy implementation will continue.

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<sup>4</sup>*Guide to Education, Elementary School Handbook ECS to Grade 6, 1990. p. 17*

## **Rockyview**

This district also took a committee approach, including the involvement of parent and community stakeholders. The committee focused on where to build better connections.

## **Lakeland Public/Ft. McMurray Catholic**

In these two districts, central office staff have been hired to work toward implementation of the policy. Their role is one of assisting school staffs to understand the policy, which may involve inservicing and consulting on a school-wide or individual basis and developing ongoing professional development activities for staffs.

## **Lakeland Public**

This district also formed a Continuity Committee and focused on four broad areas:

- effect on curriculum
- variety of grade configurations in schools
- facilities
- evaluation issues.

The committee was funded to travel across the province to look for commonalities that existed at identified schools. The patterns identified included four broad areas. Schools had:

- strong leadership
- staff commitment and accountability
- strong parental involvement
- focus on language/literature.

After the patterns were identified an Action plan was created and recommendations were sent to the Board. The main recommendations included:

- continue working together
- develop a mission statement
- central office and Board to commit to focusing on Program Continuity for at least 5 years
- develop a support system.

## **Banff Elementary**

In this zone schools are required to fill out Education Program Continuity Policy Implementation Progress Review forms on an on-going basis. A sample is included to demonstrate the types of questions and issues that are addressed. The ongoing reflection has proved invaluable in that it makes teachers and schools focus on successes, but it also makes them look ahead one step further.



## Education Program Continuity Policy Implementation Progress Review

Jurisdiction: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Submitted By: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

1. List successful activities and/or projects that have been carried out in your jurisdiction related to implementing the Education Program Continuity Policy.
2. Do you have cautions to others as a result of policy implementation experience?
3. What are your future plans?
4. Any suggestions that can assist others with implementing the policy?
5. Do you have specific areas for which you may need help?





## Link 7

### Planning Your Year





## Planning Your Year

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The next section is for personal use by teachers. It provides a yearly framework for using the Links on an on-going basis. Be sure to add to this scheme to make it your own. Blanks have been provided for your use.

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat./Sun.
<b>Aug.</b>	As a staff Read Link 6 The Bigger Picture  Read Link 4 Topic Planning	Do Outline for Year	Plan 1 Theme For Fall	Take Your Kid Q Link 1		
<b>Sept.</b>	Set up Class  Read Link 2 & 3  *Send home newsletter read Link 5 Home Connections  Establish Class Routines  Establish Class Routines  Establish Class Routines	Establish Class Code See Link 2  Students Set Goals for Year See Link 2	Identify Roles for Parents & Community       Read/Reflect on Link 3 Establish a Writing Environment	Establish Centers Link 2	Identify Buddy Class in School for Shared Reading/ Writing & Other Activities  Yearly Plans Finished	
<b>Oct.</b>	Send home newsletter   *Are Parents Connecting to Class yet?  Prep for Report Cards  Buddy Class *Activity	Contact Parents re child's progress & adjustment to school.   Send Letter home See Link 5		Set Priorities & Time Lines		

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat./Sun.
Nov.	<p>*Send home newsletter</p> <p>Adjust class to meet on-going needs</p> <p>Report Cards</p>	<p>Read Link 4 Plan 1 Theme for Winter</p>		<p>Look back at Long Range Plans. Adjust if necessary</p> <p>Review New Look at Centres</p> <p>Read Link 2 &amp; 3 Reflect on Environment</p> <p>Retake Kid Q How is your score?</p>	<p>Buddy Class Activity</p> <p>Report Card on yourself</p>	
Dec.	<p>Send home newsletter</p> <p>Look back at Long Range Plans. Adjust if necessary</p>		<p>Have You Acknowledged Parent Volunteers Yet?</p>		<p>*Buddy Class Activity</p>	
Jan.	<p>Send home newsletter</p> <p>Look back at Long Range Plans. Adjust if necessary</p>	<p>Read Link 2 &amp; 3 Reflect on Environment</p> <p>Read Link 4 Plan Theme for Spring</p>		<p>Is environment changing to meet the needs of students? Adjust if necessary</p> <p>*What about your New Look at Centres?</p>	<p>Buddy Class Activity</p>	



	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat./Sun.
<b>Feb.</b>	Send home newsletter  Prep for Report Cards  Look back at Long Range Plans. Adjust if necessary	Send letter home See Link 5		Read Link 3 for Writing ideas	*Buddy Class Activity	
<b>Mar.</b>	Send home newsletter  Report Cards  Look back at Long Range Plans. Adjust if necessary				*Buddy Class Activity	
<b>Apr.</b>	Send home newsletter   Read Link 4   Have You Acknowledged Parent Helpers Recently?  Look back at Long Range Plans. Adjust if necessary	Plan 1 Theme for June	Read Link 2 & 3 Is the environment changing to meet needs of students?  What's happening with your Centers?		*Buddy Class Activity	

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat./Sun.
<b>May</b>	Send home newsletter  Prep for Final Report Card   Look back at Long Range Plans. Adjust if necessary	Letter home to Parents See Link 5	Reread Link 3 to focus strategies		*Buddy Class Activity	
<b>June</b>	Send home newsletter  Report Cards   Do Final Evaluation of Yearly Plans - make recommendations/ adjustments for next year		Parent Appreciation Activity		*Final Buddy Class Activity	
<b>July</b>						

Year \_\_\_\_\_

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat./Sun.
Aug.						
Sept.						
Oct.						

Year \_\_\_\_\_

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat./Sun.
Nov.						
Dec.						
Jan.						

Year \_\_\_\_\_

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat./Sun.
Feb.						
Mar.						
Apr.						

Year \_\_\_\_\_

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat./Sun.
May						
June						
July						





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  3. In the School
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# Acknowledgements

**Bill Godfrey**

Malmo Elementary School  
Edmonton Public Schools

**Joanne Randall**

Malmo Elementary School  
Edmonton Public Schools

**Gloria Cathcart**

Malmo Elementary School  
Edmonton Public Schools

**Stephen Leppard**

Malmo Elementary School  
Edmonton Public Schools

**Malmo Elementary School**

*School Handbook*

**Paul Bryant**

Nicholas Sheran Community School  
Lethbridge S.D. #51

**Rob Wilson**

St. Anne School  
Fort McMurray Roman Catholic  
Separate S.D. #32

**Mike Forbis**

Galbraith Elementary School  
Lethbridge Public S.D. #51

**Brian West**

Banff Elementary School  
Banff S.D. #102

**Pieter Grobler**

Banff Elementary School  
Banff S.D. #102

**Terry Brannigan**

**Simone Lahey**  
Edwards Elementary School  
Rockyview S.D. #41

**Randy Hopkins**

Woking School  
Spirit River S.D. #47

**Alberta Teachers' Association****Lesly Johnson**

Birchwood School  
Fort McMurray Public S.D. #2833

**Marilyn Hrycauk**

Nelson Heights School  
Lakeland Public S.D. #5460

**Cheryl MacDonald**

Father Kenneth Kearns School  
Sherwood Park Catholic Separate S.D.

**Muriel Kutchison**

Holy Family Elem./Jr. High School  
Edmonton Catholic S.D.

**Victor Steel,**

**Humanities Consultant**  
Fort McMurray Roman Catholic  
Separate S.D. #32

**Sheila Fraser**

Woodbridge Farms School  
Strathcona County Schools

**Marion Watson**

Woodbridge Farms School  
Strathcona County Schools

**Joyce Johnson**

New Sarepta Elementary School  
County of Leduc #25

**Loraine Farris**

Baturyn Elementary School  
Edmonton Public Schools

**Tony Hampshire**

Millarville Community School  
Foothills S.D. #38

**Lorretta Stabler**

Millarville Community School  
Foothills S.D. #38

**Ellen Yakimyshyn****Christine Campbell****Pat Kehlert**

Win Ferguson Community School  
Strathcona County Schools

St. Mary School

Grade 2

Planning Team

**John Proctor,**

**Supervisor of Programs**  
Strathcona County Schools





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